

READING ESTHER IN THE LEVANTINE LITERARY TRADITION*

Scholars have noted a host of potential intertexts for Esther. The story of Joseph in Genesis 37–50 may provide some language, literary features, and themes in Esther ¹. Links with the account of Saul and Agag in 1 Samuel 15, as well as that story's background in the Hebrews' encounter with the Amalekites in Exodus 17 and God's response in Deut 25,17–19, place Esther at the end of a longstanding conflict well known in the Hebrew Bible ². Esther also has overlaps with the book of Daniel ³, *Enuma Elish* ⁴, and further potential intertexts ⁵. Though the creator(s) of Esther was likely steeped in the language and stories of the Joseph Story and Samuel-Kings ⁶, and though some intentional use of other texts remains possible, I suggest that most of the overlaps more plausibly stem from a common literary tradition. In this study, I explore ways the text of Esther parallels the Baal Cycle; 1 Samuel 25; 2 Samuel 14; and 1 Kings 1–2. Rather than suggest

* I am grateful to Susannah Rees, Jan Joosten, and Andrés Piquer Otero for their helpful suggestions and feedback on earlier versions of this study.

¹ See L.A. ROSENTHAL, “Die Josephgeschichte mit den Büchern Ester und Daniel verglichen”, ZAW 15 (1895) 278–284; J.D. LEVENSON, *Esther*. A Commentary (OTL; Louisville, KY 1997) throughout; A. BERLIN, *Esther* (JPS Bible Commentary; Philadelphia, PA 2001) xxxvii; J. GROSSMAN, “‘Dynamic Analogies’ in the Book of Esther”, VT 59 (2009) 394–414, here 397–399; A. KOLLER, *Esther in Ancient Jewish Thought* (Cambridge 2014) 39, 81–85; B. EGO, *Ester* (BKAT 21; Göttingen 2017) 24.

² Cf. BERLIN, *Esther*, xxxviii–xxxix, 85; M. FOX, *Character and Ideology in the Book of Esther* (Grand Rapids, MI 2001) 115; LEVENSON, *Esther*, 122; C.A. MOORE, *Esther* (AB 7B; Garden City, N.Y. 1971) 87–88; KOLLER, *Esther*, 49–53, 86–89; EGO, *Ester*, 24–25. However, in the Alpha Text of Esther, Haman is not descended from Agag, and the Jews plunder the spoil in ch. 9 (and therefore they do not finish Saul's unfinished business in 1 Samuel 15). On the Alpha Text, see footnote 45.

³ GROSSMAN, “Dynamic Analogies”, 397–399; cf. BERLIN, *Esther*, xl; KOLLER, *Esther*, 40–41.

⁴ A. SILVERSTEIN, “The Book of Esther and the *Enūma Elish*”, BSOAS 69 (2006) 209–223; KOLLER, *Esther*, 36–37.

⁵ For four others, see GROSSMAN, “Dynamic Analogies”, 399–413; and EGO, *Ester*, 25–30.

⁶ For the Joseph story, see footnote 1; for Samuel-Kings, compare, for example, Esth 2,23 (in MT's version); 6,1; and 10,2 with 1 Kgs 14,19,29; 15,7,23,31; 16,5,14,20,27; 22,39,46; 2 Kgs 1,18; 8,23; 10,34; 12,20; 13,8,12; 14,15,18,28; 15,6,11,15,21,26,31,36; 16,19; 20,20; 21,17,25; 23,28; 24,5. Cf. A. FRISCH, *בין מגילת אסתר לספר מלכים* (“Between the Book of Esther and the Book of Kings”), *Mehkerei Hag* 3 (1992) 29–30; J. VAN SETERS, “Creative Imitation in the Hebrew Bible”, *Studies in Religion* 29 (2000) 395–409, here 400.

Esther interacts directly with these texts ⁷, I argue that they all use similar narrative structures and motifs belonging to the Levantine literary tradition. Esther, the Baal Cycle, 1 Samuel 25, 2 Samuel 14, and 1 Kings 1–2 employ the plot-type of the female intermediary. Moreover, Esther, the Baal Cycle, and 1 Kings 1–2 share a number of further motifs suggesting a larger narrative structure, one that employs the female intermediary plot-type within a story of struggle for power.

I. THE LEVANTINE LITERARY TRADITION

In his study of the Ugaritic stories *Kirtu* and *Aqhat*, Simon Parker highlights the manifold similarities between Ugaritic narrative and the stories found in the Hebrew Bible ⁸. He argues there was “a rich narrative tradition spread throughout the Northwest Semitic-speaking settlements of the Eastern Mediterranean”, extending from at least the second millennium into the period when the Hebrew Bible’s stories were told and eventually written ⁹. Most of the products of this tradition are no longer extant, but some survive at Ugarit and in the stories of the Hebrew Bible. Parker’s focus falls on narratives, often neglected in favor of another area where Israel’s literature partakes in the stylistics of a broader tradition: poetry ¹⁰. The Levantine literary tradition made regular use of numerous literary elements, ranging from small tropes to entire story-structures. Rather than arguing for direct dependence in the many cases where the Hebrew Bible parallels Ugaritic literature, Parker posits that both bodies of literature participate in the same literary tradition. After his analysis of many features shared by Ugaritic and biblical literature, he concludes that when “the

⁷ Compare, for example, SILVERSTEIN, “Esther and the *Enūma Elish*”, 223: “the person who recorded these events (or created the story [of Esther] *ex nihilo*) was closely acquainted with Babylonian literature in general and the *Enūma Elish* in particular”; and GROSSMAN, “Dynamic Analogies”, 395: “[Making allusions to many texts] should be regarded as an intentional literary phenomenon [meant to] present an obstacle to the reader in maintaining a steady reading of the analogies between the narratives”.

⁸ S.B. PARKER, *The Pre-Biblical Narrative Tradition* (SBLRBS 24; Atlanta, GA 1989); see also “Ugaritic Literature and the Bible”, *NEA* 63 (2000) 228–231.

⁹ PARKER, *Narrative Tradition*, 4. See similarly J. GREENFIELD, “The Hebrew Bible and Canaanite Literature”, *The Literary Guide to the Bible* (eds. R. ALTER – F. KERMODE) (Cambridge, MA 1987) 545–560; R. HENDEL, *The Epic of the Patriarch*. The Jacob Cycle and the Narrative Traditions of Canaan and Israel (HSM 42; Atlanta, GA 1987); and see M. SMITH, “Biblical Narrative between Ugaritic and Akkadian Literature: Part I: Ugarit and the Hebrew Bible: Consideration of Comparative Research”, *RB* 114 (2007) 5–29, for a survey of other similar approaches (including Smith’s own).

¹⁰ See, e.g., W.G.E. WATSON, *Traditional Techniques in Classical Hebrew Verse* (JSOTSup 170; Sheffield 1994).

narrative structure [used is] common to [Ugaritic narrative and other narrative, the similarity stems from] the structure of a common traditional tale, episode or motif taken up and adapted in different ways”¹¹.

To be sure, parallels to the Hebrew Bible can be found in the literature of ancient Mesopotamia and Egypt, and there must have been shared traditions and literary modes in the entire ancient Near East and beyond¹². K.C. Hanson, for example, argues that “Royal Deviance Narratives” recur in ancient Israel, Hattusa, and Greece¹³. This should not surprise us, as there was plenty of interaction between civilizations in Syria, such as Ugarit, and those in Anatolia, whose nations in turn were engaged with Mycenaean culture, both in the bronze age and later¹⁴. Because Ugaritic language and literature represent “the antecedents of the language and literature of ancient Israel” better than other ancient Near Eastern languages and literatures, Parker posits tighter “cultural continuities between the second and first millennium literatures of the Levant” than can be found in the rest of the ancient Near East¹⁵. In *Stories in Scripture and Inscriptions*, Parker demonstrates that similar parallels appear between Canaanite literature and the Hebrew Bible. This is an important confirmation of his earlier argument based on the Ugaritic literature¹⁶. Epigraphic materials in Hebrew (Mesad Hashavyahu), Moabite (the Mesha Stele), Phoenician and Samalian (Zinjirli), and Aramaic (Tel Dan, Sefire, the Stele of Zakkur) preserve stories that share literary structures and motifs with biblical literature.

There is also, of course, a more narrowly defined literary tradition belonging to the people of Israel and early Judaism, a tradition entwined with cultural traditions and religious identity. Andrew Teeter, for example, argues that *Jubilees* 11 draws on such a tradition rather than a single source text, weaving together narrative forms, motifs, and traditions of

¹¹ PARKER, *Narrative Tradition*, 220.

¹² See SMITH, “Biblical Narrative between Ugaritic and Akkadian Literature”, 10-11.

¹³ K.C. HANSON, “When the King Crosses the Line: Royal Deviance and Restitution in Levantine Ideologies”, *BTB* 26 (1996) 11-25. Against the idea that these stories are similar due to “literary dependence” or “some common source”, Hanson argues that “shared cultural assumptions and social structures” result in the common story-type (23).

¹⁴ See, for example, C. LAMBROU-PHILIPPSON, *Hellenorientalia*. The Near Eastern Presence in the Bronze Age Aegean, ca. 3000-1100 B.C. (Göteborg 1990), on periods leading up to the Bronze Age collapse; and see W. BURKERT, *The Orientalizing Revolution*. Near Eastern Influence on Greek Culture in the Early Archaic Age (trans. M.E. PINDER – W. BURKERT) (Cambridge, MA 1992), for interaction from the 8th century BCE onward.

¹⁵ PARKER, *Narrative Tradition*, 225; cf. SMITH, “Biblical Narrative between Ugaritic and Akkadian Literature”, 9.

¹⁶ S.B. PARKER, *Stories in Scripture and Inscriptions*. Comparative Studies on Narratives in Northwest Semitic Inscriptions and the Hebrew Bible (Oxford 1997).

interpretation associated with exemplary characters from Israel's past ¹⁷. Though the tradition operative for *Jubilees* involves literary elements, it is more than just literary. The elements of Esther that I focus on here do not stem from a tradition particular to Israel or ancient Judaism, but to the broader Levantine literary tradition.

The two literary elements I identify here are not simply tropes or motifs, though they include some of these. They are also more than type scenes, since each involves more than one scene. These are large narrative forms or structures with generally set features, which for convenience I call "plot-types" because of how they appear in the texts I discuss. These plot-types are flexible, however, and can be used according to the storyteller's needs; they may be filled out, paired down to their basic frameworks, or even referred to very briefly, as motifs. Parker, using both the term "structure" and "motif" (reflecting the flexibility of these literary features) notes the pluriform ways in which plot-types can be used:

[T]he basic narrative structure or motif is a traditional given. The poets [=authors of narratives] may use it in its simplest form to initiate another action; or they may use it as a framework on which to develop a lengthy and elaborate version, or as one strand in a complex interwoven narrative, or (more rarely) as the recurrent motif of stories within stories ¹⁸.

Such "telescoping and expansion" was characteristic of the Levantine narrative tradition ¹⁹. As alluded to in the quote above, an additional aspect of flexibility in the use of plot-types was the storyteller's freedom to combine and weave together various plot-types in various ways. In *Kirta*, for example, the "expedition for a spouse" plot-type was "subordinated" to the "dream theophany", and both were "framed by the loss and recovery of family" plot-type ²⁰. *Jubilees* 11, according to Teeter's analysis, is another example where multiple literary features and structures are combined for a new purpose in a text ²¹. Esther employs several literary structures and plot-types, both those I discuss below as well as others ²². In short, the storyteller was not bound or restricted by the plot-type; he or she was free to modify any and all of its aspects, and to combine and draw

¹⁷ D.A. TEETER, "On 'Exegetical Function' in Rewritten Scripture: Inner-Biblical Exegesis and the Abram/Ravens Narrative in *Jubilees*", *HTR* 106 (2013) 373-402.

¹⁸ PARKER, *Narrative Tradition*, 224.

¹⁹ PARKER, *Narrative Tradition*, 224.

²⁰ PARKER, *Narrative Tradition*, 223.

²¹ Cf. TEETER, "On 'Exegetical Function' in Rewritten Scripture", 374: "[The interests, motives, and aims of authors] determine the structure or literary shape of their work, including such basic elements as character, plot, scope, and narrative voice".

²² E.g., the "court tale"; cf. L. WILLS, *The Jew in the Court of the Foreign King*. Ancient Jewish Court Legends (Minneapolis, MN 1990) esp. 153-191.

on multiple plot-types, besides other elements from the literary tradition. In none of the texts I treat here is a plot-type reduced to a mere motif ²³; however, the female intermediary plot-type takes a different shape in each story. In the Baal cycle, the nature of Ugaritic epic with its lengthy repetitions reduces the plot-type's role to a general framework. And in the two stories in 1 Kings 1–2, the intermediary's actions and character are not as full, or characterized in the same way, as 1 Samuel 25, 2 Samuel 14, and Esther. In several of the stories the intermediary is the queen or queen-mother (the Baal cycle, 1 Kings 2, and Esther, reflecting the social background of KTU 2.14), while in other cases she is characterized as wise (1 Samuel 25, 2 Samuel 14, and Esther); these are perhaps two features that were typical of the female intermediary plot-type, but not required.

II. FEMALE INTERMEDIARIES

In the Baal cycle, 1 Samuel 25, 2 Samuel 14, 1 Kings 1–2 ²⁴, and Esther, female intermediaries make requests to the king on behalf of supplicants.

	<i>Supplicant</i>	<i>Intermediary</i>	<i>King</i>
Baal cycle	Ba'lu	Anatu and Athiratu	Ilu
1 Samuel 25	Nabal (unwittingly)	Abigail	David ²⁵
2 Samuel 14	Joab on behalf of Absalom	A wise woman from Tekoa	David
1 Kings 1	Nathan on behalf of Solomon	Bathsheba	David
1 Kings 2	Adonijah	Bathsheba	Solomon
Esther	Mordecai on behalf of the Jews in Persia	Esther	Ahashverosh

²³ Judg 1,12-15 might be an instance where the female intermediary plot-type is “telescoped” and used as a motif. Caleb uses typical language to invite his daughter's request on her husband's behalf (מה לך; cf. 1 Kgs 1,16 and Esth 5,3), and she begins her response with a politeness (הבה לי ברכה, “give me a blessing”) before asking Caleb for a field.

²⁴ Though 1 Samuel 25, 2 Samuel 14, and 1 Kings 1–2 are all passages within a wider context, they reflect distinct stories, whose history goes back beyond the texts we have today; Parker thus takes such stories to be better indicators of the Levantine literary tradition. Though the smaller stories have “substantive links with the larger context”, their “resistant integrity” entails that they can be analyzed on their own; PARKER, *Stories in Scripture*, 7.

²⁵ Though David was not yet reigning in place of Saul, he was a powerful person, and readers know that he has been chosen to replace Saul and will become king.

In 1 Samuel 25, Abigail decides to intercede for Nabal without his consent ²⁶. The story breaks in some ways from the pattern found in other stories: Nabal never asks his wife to intercede on his behalf, and David is not the king at this point in his life. David, however, is a powerful local leader whom the readers know will become king of the nation. Nabal, though he does not realize it, clearly needs something (peace) from David; moreover, in several other of these stories the person who truly benefits from the mediation is not the one who requests it (Absalom, Solomon, and the Jewish people in Persia). Abigail's acting without the prompting of a man may in fact heighten one feature characteristic of the female intermediary plot-type: the intermediary's boldness and wisdom (cf. 2 Samuel 14 and Esther). The story revolves, in large part, around the foolishness of Nabal and the wisdom of Abigail ²⁷. At the start of the story (1 Sam 25,3), the reader is told that Nabal's wife was clever (טובת שכל) but he was foolish:

וּשְׁם הָאִישׁ נָבָל וּשְׁם אִשְׁתּוֹ אַבְיָגַיִל וְהָאִשָּׁה טוֹבַת שְׂכָל וַיִּפֶּת תֹּאֵר וְהָאִישׁ קָשֶׁה וָרָע מַעֲלָלִים

The man's name was Nabal, and his wife's name was Abigail. The woman was exceptional in her prudence/insight and beautiful in form, but the man was difficult/severe and evil in deeds.

Nabal's foolishness is manifested early in the story, when he refuses to show hospitality to David and his men (vv. 9-11). He asks, rhetorically, "Who is David?" (מִי דָוִד), insinuating that David is not of enough importance to receive this kindness ²⁸. Readers, however, understand David's importance and, moreover, his power. The fact that Nabal does not realize his need to cultivate a good relationship with David only furthers the impression of his foolishness. Abigail (and others; cf. v. 17) understands the folly of Nabal's action and steps in (vv. 18-31) to repair the breach, and to save her husband and his household (cf. v. 34). She sees in herself the best diplomatic solution to the situation — she understands the potential of a female intermediary — and approaches David ²⁹. To unilaterally overturn her husband's decision is a bold action. Her boldness is manifest in her appeal to David when she calls Nabal a "man of worthlessness"

²⁶ R.W. KLEIN, *1 Samuel* (WBC 10; Waco, TX 1983) 249.

²⁷ R.S. HANCOCK, "Esther and the Politics of Negotiation: An Investigation of Public and Private Spaces in Relationship to Possibilities for Female Royal Counselors" (PhD diss., Harvard University, 2012) 78; also see her *Esther and the Politics of Negotiation*. Private and Public Spaces and the Figure of the Female Royal Counselor (Emerging Scholars; Minneapolis, MN 2013), to which I unfortunately do not have access.

²⁸ KLEIN, *1 Samuel*, 248-249.

²⁹ Cf. KLEIN, *1 Samuel*, 249.

(אִישׁ הַבִּלְעֵל) and pronounces the story's overall characterization of Nabal via etymology — נָבִלָה עִמּוֹ, “folly is with him” (v. 25). At the same time, Abigail is careful to act with decorum, prostrating herself, asking for permission to speak (v. 24), apologizing for the situation her husband has created (v. 28)³⁰, and blessing David (vv. 28-31). David praises Abigail's “judgment” (טֵעָם; v. 33) and grants her request (v. 35). When Abigail returns to her husband, Nabal is drunk and does not have enough sense to understand what Abigail has done for him (v. 36). Like Adonijah and Haman, Nabal ends up dead at the end of the affair (1 Sam 25,38).

The general pattern of the female intermediary trope, then, is present in 1 Samuel 25. The differences derive from the unique emphases of the narrative and the ways the narrative's composer(s) wanted to shape the material. If David were already king, Nabal might have kept his foolishness in check; and if Nabal had asked for Abigail's help, her courage would be less salient. Abigail's action is not a desperate, last moment attempt to do something — anything — to turn away David's anger. She acts quickly, but it is a wise and thoughtful course of action; it is the right way to handle the situation, fitting the pattern we see in other Levantine literature and possibly in the customs of the royal court of Ugarit. Knowing the plot-type, readers view Abigail's action as perfectly appropriate, which fits her characterization as a wise and discerning woman. In the larger context of 1 Samuel 24–26, David's refraining from violence in 1 Samuel 25 figures more prominently³¹; when 1 Samuel 25 is read as a distinct tale, however, Abigail is clearly the protagonist.

In 2 Samuel 14, Joab employs a female intermediary to secure Absalom's safe return to Israel. All that is said about this woman is that she is from Tekoa and that she is “wise” (חֲכָמָה). She is, above all else, a skillful actress who delivers a concocted story about her family situation that, as David will later discover, illustrates his situation with Absalom (vv. 5-9)³². She then proceeds to carefully and decorously guide their conversation (see esp. vv. 12, 18) to the desired outcome, and David allows Absalom to return to Israel without guilt (v. 21)³³. Parker discusses elements of this

³⁰ Or perhaps her statement “forgive the transgression of your maidservant” (שָׂא נָא (לְפָנֶיךָ אִמְתָּךְ) is another act of decorum within the conversation, with the sense “forgive me for speaking further”; P.K. McCarter, Jr., *I Samuel* (AB 8; Garden City, NY 1980) 398.

³¹ D.T. Tsumura, *The First Book of Samuel* (Grand Rapids, MI 2007) 575.

³² P.K. McCarter, Jr., *II Samuel* (AB 9; Garden City, NY 1984) 351. See Nathan's use of the same technique in 2 Samuel 12.

³³ As Hancock notes, “it is the persuasive power of the individual ... that causes the message to be heard”; HANCOCK, “Esther and the Politics of Negotiation”, 73, cf. 72-74. McCarter argues similarly: “It is high testimony to the Tekoite woman's craft that she is

story in light of other petitionary narratives in Samuel-Kings and Mešad Hashavyahu, but does not focus on the use of a female intermediary or connect the story to Baʿlu literature, 1 Samuel 25, 1 Kings 1–2, or Esther ³⁴. Like Abigail, the woman of Tekoa is bold — in her conversation with the king, she does most of the talking, addressing many issues sensitive to the king — yet careful and wise, asking for David’s permission to proceed at crucial points ³⁵.

The stories of Abigail and the wise woman of Tekoa show the value of wisdom, propriety, and courage — elements that also come to the fore in Esther and 1 Kings 1–2 ³⁶. It therefore seems reasonable to consider the woman in the prototypical female intermediary plot-type to be characterized by wisdom, decorum, and courage. These women act freely; although in 2 Samuel 14 and Esther it is men (Joab and Mordecai) who put them up to the task, after each woman agrees to the proposal she controls the entire process ³⁷. These women are true agents, not instruments in the hands of others.

In the Ugaritic Baal cycle, Baʿlu sends Anatu and Athiratu to ask his father Ilu that he be allowed to build a palace. At the start of the story, Ilu granted Yammu’s request to become king, and proclaimed that Baʿlu should serve him. Baʿlu explains his plight to Anatu (KTU 1.2 IV 84 and onward), and she either decides on her own (like Abigail) or is asked by Baʿlu (the text there is not extant) to speak with Ilu (column V). Whether or not she was asked to be an intermediary, she is convinced that Baʿlu is right, proclaiming, “[I will ma]ke his (=Ilu’s) grey hair [run] with blood” ³⁸. Unlike the wise and patient women we find in the other female intermediary stories, when Anatu first approaches Ilu she is very angry, telling him, “I will smash your head ... I will make your beard run with blood” ³⁹.

able so effectively to command royal sympathy for herself and her son over against the legitimate claims of the clan. More remarkable still is the facility with which she is able to elicit a parallel to the case of Abishalom.” McCARTER, *II Samuel*, 351.

³⁴ PARKER, *Stories in Scripture*, 26–30.

³⁵ Note also the portrayal of Amnon as foolish (2 Sam 13,13) and the role of drunkenness (2 Sam 13,28) in the story leading up to 2 Samuel 14. Absalom and Esther both use strong drink to accomplish their purposes.

³⁶ J.A. LOADER, “Jedidiah or: Amadeus. Thoughts on the Succession Narrative and Wisdom”, *Studies in the Succession Narrative* (ed. W.C. VAN WYK) (Pretoria, South Africa 1986) 167–201; on the female intermediary trope and wisdom in 2 Samuel 14, 1 Kings 1–2, and Esther, see especially p. 177.

³⁷ Similarly, in 1 Kings 1 Bathsheba is prompted by Nathan to approach David, but she executes the plan using her own judgment; FRISCH, “Between Esther and Kings”, 28.

³⁸ KTU 1.3 V 2; translation from M.S. SMITH – W.T. PITARD, *The Ugaritic Baal Cycle, Volume II*. Introduction with Text, Translation and Commentary of KTU/CAT 1.3–4 (VTSup 114; Leiden 2009) 324.

³⁹ SMITH – PITARD, *Baal Cycle*, 326.

Ilu responds not with wrath, but placatingly (and almost feebly). He asks his daughter, “What is [your] request?” This either assuages Anatu’s anger, or shows Anatu that Ilu is now an ally — unlike earlier in the story when he supported Yammu. This response allows Anatu to use more tact in her approach, and she begins her appeal by praising Ilu’s wisdom (KTU 1.3 V 30-31). She then describes Ba’lu’s situation: he has defeated Yammu and become king, but has no house, unlike other gods in the pantheon (32-44; cf. the repetition in broken context in KTU 1.4 I 4-19). The acquisition of a house is prerequisite for kingship in this story (Yammu builds a house in KTU 1.2 III before demanding the throne from Ilu in column IV). The tablet then breaks off.

This first mediation apparently does not work: when we are able to pick the story up again (after long lacunae), we find Ba’lu and Anatu scheming a way to get their mother, Athiratu, to join them in appealing to Ilu (KTU 1.4 I-III). Athiratu is convinced and she goes to supplicate Ilu on Ba’lu’s behalf. Instead of starting her encounter with Ilu with an angry tirade like Anatu, Athiratu wisely bows down and honors Ilu (*tšthwy w tkbdh*; KTU 1.4 IV 26). Perhaps this reflects proper court etiquette; letters to superiors found at Ugarit often include the line “I have bowed down at your feet” in one form or another⁴⁰. This pleases the king, and his words of response are longer and more pleasant than the brief response he gave to Anatu before — *where have you been*, he says, and *come in and banquet with me* (IV 31-39). Athiratu then makes her request in the same words that Anatu used in the previous episode: after praising Ilu’s wisdom (41-43), she explains that Ba’lu is king but does not have a house. This time, we can read the end of the appeal and see Ilu’s response. Athiratu never explicitly asks (“please build Ba’lu a house”) or even suggests (“let Ilu build Ba’lu a house”) to Ilu, but instead leaves the request implied. This may stem from the propriety of the court scene, and/or it may be a tactic to encourage Ilu to accede to the implied request — *you are very wise, what do you make of this: Ba’lu, our king, has no palace!* Athiratu’s intercession works: Ilu agrees to build Ba’lu a house (KTU 1.4 IV 62 – V 1). Athiratu responds by praising Ilu, with words that seem to echo Anatu’s earlier tirade: *rbt . ilm . l ħkmt // šbt . dqnk . l tsrk*, “You are great, Ilu, indeed you are wise, the grey of your beard indeed instructs you” (KTU 1.4 VI 3-4).

In the Baal cycle’s version of the female intermediary trope, much of the language is formulaic, and as a result the story and its characters are

⁴⁰ E.g., KTU 2.89, a letter to the queen from an official, begins with the typical address and then the formulaic *l . p’n . adty . qlt*, “at the feet of my lady I have fallen”.

not as well-rounded as they are in 1 Samuel 25 or 2 Samuel 14. We see, for example, that Athiratu has more patience and tact than Anatu, but most of their words to Ilu are identical. As Parker notes, plot-types are flexible, and can be used, as here, as general frameworks.

In 1 Kings 1–2, two distinct female intermediary scenarios occur as part of the larger plot-type discussion in section III. In 1 Kings 1, Nathan and Bathsheba plan Bathsheba's encounter with King David (vv. 11–14): Bathsheba will remind David of an earlier promise⁴¹ to make Solomon king and inform David of Adonijah's actions, and then Nathan will arrive, as if by coincidence, and confirm her words. In the encounter itself, Bathsheba begins by bowing before David (v. 16; she bows again in v. 31). After he asks for her request, Bathsheba does not state it explicitly, instead implying that Solomon ought to be king (vv. 17–21). She does not tell the king directly what to do; instead, she guides him into thinking it for himself. Nathan arrives as planned, confirming that Adonijah has made himself king (vv. 22–27). The statements in combination put David over the edge — if both Nathan and Bathsheba have independently realized this as a problem, he thinks, it must be a significant problem indeed⁴². Perhaps David would have come to the same conclusion if Nathan had come alone and explained, very objectively, the situation; the rhetorical effect of Bathsheba's and Nathan's combined effort, however, ensures the right response from David.

In her first intermediary mission with the king, Bathsheba takes a careful course of action and makes sure to show deference to the king. In her second mission in 1 Kings 2 on behalf of Adonijah, she does not take the same care. Adonijah asks Bathsheba to act on his behalf in seeking Abishag as his wife. This request to marry the former king's concubine is easily interpreted as a play for power⁴³, though Adonijah must have thought the goal was possible — otherwise, he would not have asked. The difference between success and failure, then, arguably comes down to the skill employed by his intermediary, Bathsheba. The contrast between the first and second episodes is instructive. Instead of Bathsheba bowing to the king, Solomon bows to Bathsheba, and she is seated at his right hand before they converse (1 Kgs 2,19). Instead of carefully broaching the subject and leaving Solomon to infer the request, Bathsheba simply

⁴¹ Whether or not such a promise was actually made is unimportant for my discussion; cf. W. DIETRICH, "Das Ende der Thronfolgegeschichte", *Die sogenannte Thronfolgegeschichte Davids*. Neue Einsichten und Anfragen (eds. A. DE PURY – T. RÖMER) (OBO 176; Göttingen 2000) 38–69, here 46.

⁴² Cf. M. SWEENEY, *I & II Kings* (OTL; Louisville, KY 2013) 57.

⁴³ DIETRICH, "Das Ende der Thronfolgegeschichte", 42.

states, without delay, **לֹאֲדֹנִיָּהוּ אֶחִיךָ לְאִשָּׁה**, “let Abishag be given to Adonijah your brother as a wife” (v. 21). As a result of her lack of deference and tact, the mission is essentially doomed to fail, and Adonijah pays dearly (vv. 24-25). One might suspect Bathsheba’s lack of deference is due to the fact the new king is her son; but in 1 Kings 1 David is a feeble old man, whom she could have disregarded just as easily. Bathsheba acts with deference and tact before David because she wants to secure the right outcome, but in the second episode she is indifferent — her actions show that she is not sympathetic to Adonijah in the way she was to Solomon ⁴⁴.

In the book of Esther, much of the plot revolves around and depends on Esther approaching the king on Mordecai’s behalf. Though she may not, in the end, be safe (Esth 4,13), in the short term it is the Jewish people as a whole who are in danger ⁴⁵. Mordecai’s command to Esther that she plead with the king (Esth 4,8) comes straight from the female intermediary plot-type.

וְאֵת פִּתְשָׁנָן כָּתַב הַדָּת נָתַן לוֹ ... לְצוּרֹת עֲלֶיהָ לְבֹאֹא אֶל הַמֶּלֶךְ לְהַתְחַנֵּן לוֹ וּלְבַקֵּשׁ מִלְפָּנָיו
עַל עַמָּהּ

[Mordecai] gave [Hathach] a copy of the writing of the law [to kill the Jews], in order to command [Esther] to go to the king to make supplication to him and to seek from him on behalf of her people.

The use of the verb **בִּקֵּשׁ** (Piel) without a complement — typically one seeks *something* — might reflect the fact that this is a known action that

⁴⁴ *Contra* Mordechai Cogan, who reads Bathsheba’s actions in both chs. 1 and 2 as “artfully ambiguous”: *1 Kings* (AB 10; New Haven, CT 2008) 176. Bathsheba’s initial responses to *Adonijah* in 1 Kings 2 are indeed ambiguous — she says only **דַּבֵּר**, “speak” (i.e., continue with the conversation; vv. 14 and 16), and finally responds in the affirmative that she will speak to Solomon for Adonijah (v. 18). But her way of handling the conversation with Solomon shows the readers that she does not support Adonijah in the same way she supported her own son. The subtle differences in her actions in these two episodes indicate that Bathsheba in 1 Kings 1–2 is not “a passive and naïve personality”, *contra* I. KALIMI, “The Rise of Solomon in the Ancient Israelite Historiography”, *The Figure of Solomon in Jewish, Christian and Islamic Tradition*. King, Sage and Architect (ed. J. VERHEYDEN) (Leiden 2013) 7-44, here 16.

⁴⁵ The important features of the text focused on here are found in both the Masoretic Text (MT) and the Greek Alpha Text of Esther. Where the Alpha Text does not contain the feature under discussion, I note this in footnotes. Where Hebrew is quoted it is plausibly represented by Greek in the Alpha Text unless I state otherwise. For a brief introduction to the Alpha Text and an English translation aligned to the other Greek version (by which one can align the Alpha Text to the Hebrew), see K. JOBES, “Esther”, *A New English Translation of the Septuagint* (eds. A. PIETERSMA – B.G. WRIGHT) (New York 2007) 424-440. See also the recent summary of EGO, *Ester*, 4-10; and cf. D.J.A. CLINES, *The Esther Scroll*. The Story of the Story (JSOTSupp 30; Sheffield 1984); and K.H. JOBES, *The Alpha-Text of Esther*. Its Character and Relationship to the Masoretic Text (Atlanta, GA 1996).

Esther is taking. She is *seeking from the king*, that is, serving as an intermediary on behalf of someone else (עַל עַמָּה, “on behalf of her people”).

This is the last time Mordecai will “command” Esther in the book — cf. earlier in 2,10.20 where Esther is characterized as obedient to Mordecai. At the end of this episode, Mordecai obeys Esther’s command (4,17), and from this point onward she is in control of the process⁴⁶. Like Abigail and the wise woman of Tekoa, Esther is the protagonist. In a departure from the typical female intermediary story, Esther does not supplicate the king in her first encounter with him, but defers several times (see section IV). When Esther finally makes her request (7,3 and 8,5 in MT), the king grants it (8,8), and the Jewish people are saved. In section IV, I explore how recognizing the female intermediary plot-type in Esther leads to a fuller reading.

These stories share literary elements beyond the employment of women as intermediaries. While men also appear in intermediary roles in Levantine literature, I am unaware of any stories with male intermediaries that follow the same general outline of the plot-type found in the Baal Cycle, 1 Samuel 25, 2 Samuel 14, 1 Kings 1–2, and Esther. It seems probable that the woman’s role in this plot-type is rooted in realities from the ancient world. Clues in the Hebrew Bible and evidence from the ancient Near East suggest that women in the ancient world were often advisers and mediators, endowed with authority appropriate to such roles⁴⁷. These roles may have been an extension of a woman’s role within her family, where skillful household management was connected to wisdom and where motherhood made a woman an important authority and counselor for her children⁴⁸. Indeed, the mother of the king is often portrayed as an important advisor⁴⁹. A letter found at Ugarit suggests that the female intermediary trope was rooted in real practice. In one letter found at Ugarit (KTU 2.14), Iwridenu requests that Thariyelli — who was either the queen or the queen-mother at that time — speak to the king on his behalf⁵⁰. Perhaps this letter and the female intermediary plot-type reflect a standardized “protocol” for

⁴⁶ The language of “command” (צוה) is not present in the Alpha Text of Esther at this point.

⁴⁷ For an overview of the evidence and its interpretation, see HANCOCK, “Esther and the Politics of Negotiation”, 72-87. As part of this overview, Hancock treats the stories under review here; her analysis of potential sociohistorical realities reflected in the stories is compatible with my literary analysis.

⁴⁸ HANCOCK, “Esther and the Politics of Negotiation”, 75-76.

⁴⁹ HANCOCK, “Esther and the Politics of Negotiation”, 79-81.

⁵⁰ KTU 2.14 lines 11-13; M. DIETRICH – O. LORETZ – J. SANMARTÍN, *The Cuneiform Alphabetic Texts from Ugarit, Ras Ibn Hani and Other Places* (3d ed, KTU³; Münster 2013) 177.

behavior within the king's court ⁵¹, or perhaps the letter simply reflects the easiest way for Iwridenu to court favor with the king. A story contained in Papyrus Amherst 63 recounts that Ashurbanipal sent his sister Sheru'a-Etirat to make peace with his brother Shamash-Shum-ukin ⁵². Though this text is at some remove — temporally, geographically, and culturally — from the events it purports to relate, it is not impossible that Sheru'a-Etirat really served as a diplomatic envoy for Ashurbanipal. In light of this contextual evidence from the ancient world, together with hints from the stories themselves, a good explanation for the appearance of women in intermediary roles in the stories treated here is that women served in such roles in the real world ⁵³. Women like Esther, Abigail, and Bathsheba are not supposed to be aberrations to the norm in these stories; rather, their position as mediator is understood and expected.

III. STRUGGLE FOR POWER AND FEMALE INTERMEDIARIES

1 Kings 1–2 reflects a somewhat typical real-life setting for royal succession, and the Baal cycle — though it is applied to divine beings — is similar. Two rivals (Ba'lu and Yammu; Solomon and Adonijah) struggle to see who will ascend to the throne in place of the aging king (Ilu, David) — or alongside the aging king, as in the Baal cycle ⁵⁴. Esther does not reflect royal succession in the same way; however, it involves a similar struggle for power. In the book of Esther, Haman and Mordecai struggle not to succeed the king — who is not aged — but to serve as his second in command. Mordecai's triumph occurs when he takes this position from Haman (Esth 8,1-2).

At the start of each of these stories (the exposition), the antagonist is in a stronger position than the protagonist; this is a crucial ingredient in the plot, engendering sympathy for the protagonist, and laying the groundwork for struggle and reversal of position ⁵⁵. “Yamm is El's first choice,

⁵¹ Cf. SMITH – PITARD, *Baal Cycle*, 214.

⁵² R. STEINER – C. NIMS, “Ashurbanipal and Shamash-Shum-Ukin: A Tale of Two Brothers from the Aramaic Text in Demotic Script”, *RB* 92 (1985) 60-81, here 63-64.

⁵³ Cf. also the arguments for female authors for some of these texts; e.g., F. AHUIS, *Das “Großreich” Davids und die Rolle der Frauen*. Eine Untersuchung zur Erzählung von der Nachfolge auf dem Thron Davids (2. Sam 10-20; 1. Kön 1+2) und ihrer Trägerinnengruppe (BThSt 83; Neukirchen-Vluyn 2007).

⁵⁴ SMITH – PITARD, *Baal Cycle*, 17. For some similar observations in a comparison of Esther and 1 Kings 1 (without reference to the Baal cycle and 1 Kings 2), see FRISCH, “Between Esther and Kings”, 26-31.

⁵⁵ SMITH – PITARD make these points of comparison between the Baal cycle and 1 Kings 1–2; *Baal Cycle*, 17-18. Here I point out Esther's affinity to the same points. See

and he apparently enjoys the support of most of the divine council. Baal, on the other hand, is overlooked by El”⁵⁶. Similarly, Adonijah has the upper-hand early on in 1 Kings 1 — he declares himself king, which is tacitly approved by David’s apparent silence⁵⁷, and many people support him, including Joab and Abiathar (1 Kgs 1,5 – 7.9). After the pre-story of Esther 1–2, the exposition of the plot starts with Haman in the powerful position of second-in-command (Esth 3,1-2). By the end of each story, we see Ba’lu and Solomon reigning over their defeated enemies, and Mordecai in Haman’s position. The defeat of Yammu happens much earlier in the Baal cycle than the downfall of Adonijah and Haman; before Ba’lu goes to Ilu requesting a house, he has already defeated Yammu (KTU 1.2 IV)⁵⁸. In 1 Kings 1–2, Solomon has prevailed by the end of ch. 1, but Adonijah continues to be a problem. 1 Kings 2 reverses the roles of ch. 1, with Solomon in the stronger position (he reigns as king in 2,12), and Adonijah relying on a female intermediary (again Bathsheba) to gain power (1 Kgs 2,13-22)⁵⁹. However, Adonijah remains the antagonist: Solomon denies the request and kills Adonijah (1 Kgs 2,24-25). Esther involves a similar two-step downfall for the antagonist. First, Haman’s pride and confidence are destroyed in Esther 6 — the scene and its aftermath palpably communicate Haman’s utter humiliation — and then in Esther 7 Haman’s life itself is extinguished after Mordecai’s rise to power. A few other points of similarity include: Esther and Anatu are both “virgins” (Hebrew בְּתוּלָה, Ugaritic *batulatu*)⁶⁰; feasting and banqueting feature in all three stories⁶¹; the antagonist is portrayed as arrogant in all three stories⁶².

FRISCH, “Between Esther and Kings”, 28, on the exalted position of the antagonist at the start of 1 Kings 1 and Esther.

⁵⁶ SMITH – PITARD, *Baal Cycle*, 17; see KTU 1.2 I.

⁵⁷ 1 Kgs 1,6 states that David did not ask him, “Why have you acted thus?” (מָדוּעַ כֹּכָה) (עֲשִׂיתָ); the point is perhaps that David did not question Adonijah’s claim to the throne. Bathsheba states in v. 18 that David did not know Adonijah had declared himself king, but this may be part of her strategy to persuade David to make Solomon king instead.

⁵⁸ For this reason, Anatu and Athiratu can say to Ilu, “Ba’lu is our king”, in their appeal for Ilu to grant Ba’lu a house (KTU 1.3 V 32; 1.4 IV 43). Yet, there is the clear sense that Ba’lu’s succession is not really complete, because he has no palace.

⁵⁹ Ba’lu’s request to have a house and Adonijah’s request to marry Abishag (1 Kgs 2,17,22) both amount to asking for power or even kingship; SMITH – PITARD, *Baal Cycle*, 214-215.

⁶⁰ Often in the Baal cycle, e.g., KTU 1.3 V 29; Esther is never specifically called a בְּתוּלָה, but her description in Esth 2 implies that she is — she fits the criteria for beauty (in language echoing Vashti and Esth 2,2) and she was among the virgins gathered to Susa in Esther 2.

⁶¹ E.g., KTU 1.4 III and IV; 1 Kgs 1,9,25; Esth 1; 2,18; 3,15 (MT); 5,8; etc.

⁶² Cf. LOADER, “Thoughts on the Succession Narrative and Wisdom”, 177-178.

There are a number of further specific similarities between Esther and 1 Kings 1–2, which may reflect the wider Levantine tradition or may stem from a closer literary and/or textual relationship between Esther and Samuel-Kings⁶³. Given Esther's many links to other texts, I find it unlikely that Esther is interacting directly with 1 Kings 1–2. Frisch, Berlin, and Koller each argue that Esther deliberately refers to 1 Kings or has some direct literary connection⁶⁴. Koller, for example, argues that Ahashverosh is "being compared to David in his senility" through allusions to 1 Kings 1 in the book of Esther⁶⁵.

It seems implausible ... that the author would really claim that David and [Ahashverosh] were fundamentally comparable; David was still a cultural hero in Israel. Instead, the point appears to be that [Ahashverosh], *even in his prime*, is akin to David in his teetering old age⁶⁶.

One of Koller's two allusions, however, is Esther's approaching the king to seek his favor (paralleling Bathsheba's approaching David). This piece of the story of Esther is so central to the plot — giving shape to the entire story — that it can hardly originate in an effort to allude to David in 1 Kings 1.

Many of Esther's overlaps with 1 Kings 1–2 are also present in the Baal cycle, and several of these are also found in 1 Samuel 25 and 2 Samuel 14. The commonalities, therefore, are more likely the product of a shared literary tradition. There are also many differences between the stories in 1 Kings 1–2 and Esther. The similarities derive from the use of the struggle for power plot-type, entailing the subordinated use of the female intermediary plot-type. The differences naturally arise given the different aims and preferences of the authors and the different subject matters of the texts.

⁶³ See esp. the exploration of parallels in FRISCH, "Between Esther and Kings". Many scholars have noted the verbal parallel between Esth 2,2 and 1 Kgs 1,2; FOX, *Character and Ideology*, 28; LEVENSON, *Esther*, 54; FRISCH, "Between Esther and Kings," 27–28; KOLLER, *Esther*, 63. Further verbal parallels include: the intermediary's task is described in the language of "going to" (בוא אל) the king (1 Kgs 1,13; Esth 4,8); the king responds using the phrase מה לך ("What is the matter?"; 1 Kgs 1,16; Esth 5,3); the language of שאל, "to request," and שאלה, "request," is used seven times in 1 Kings 2 (vv. 16, 20, and 22) and five times in Esther (5,6–8; 7,2–3; and cf. the reprisal of the request scene in Esth 9,12–13); in response to the intermediary, the king offers his kingdom in some way — whether sarcastically (Solomon in 1 Kgs 2,22) or half the kingdom (Ahashverosh in Esth 5,3,6; 7,2).

⁶⁴ Frisch entertains the possibility of a common genre and/or historical settings for Esther and 1 Kings 1, but ultimately prefers intentional literary dependence (זיקה ספרותית) "מכוננת" as an explanation; "Between Esther and Kings", 31. Berlin argues that "the author is trying to make his story sound more biblical" and authoritative by "imitating the framework of the Books of Kings"; BERLIN, *Esther*, xxxix.

⁶⁵ KOLLER, *Esther*, 62–64.

⁶⁶ KOLLER, *Esther*, 63, emphasis original.

IV. READING ESTHER IN THE LEVANTINE LITERARY TRADITION

Parker argues for the role of historical criticism, alongside literary criticism, in the careful reading of texts ⁶⁷: attention to composition history and the “larger narrative tradition” allows a reading to proceed along both the diachronic and synchronic axes ⁶⁸. None of the stories explored in this study are “cookie cutter” instantiations of the female intermediary plot-type; the particulars of each story shape its plot, events, characters, etc. However, the female-intermediary plot-type and the struggle for power plot-type provide some of the main building blocks for Esther’s narrative. Awareness of these literary structures assists in the close reading of the text. Here, I describe a few brief examples.

The men in each story — excepting Adonijah — benefit from the employment of a female intermediary. The courage of the intermediary and her tact — her wisdom in independently negotiating the process — are of the utmost importance in accomplishing the task. When we read the actions of Abigail and the wise woman of Tekoa, we almost assume that the outcome will be in their favor, as in fact it turns out to be in both cases. Esther’s wisdom and boldness lie below the surface of the text, but are there in abundance when we look for them. The ancient audience, knowing other female intermediary stories (whether including or not including those described here), were thereby alert to the possibility that Esther was courageous, tactful, and wise. The use of court tale literary features (and/or echoes of the Joseph story) aid in this sort of reading. Esther boldly approaches the king, a potentially fatal action in her context. Yet, when she is asked what she wants, and is promised the king’s favor in very generous terms (5,3), she does not go for Haman’s throat immediately. Instead, she delays (5,4); and then at the next opportunity, she delays again (5,7). This is necessary, on the one hand, for the complex plot of Esther to unravel — what follows from 5,4 to 7,3. On the other hand, in the world of the text, the delays show Esther to be cautious and extremely wise; though she could not know all the events that would transpire to lay the groundwork for Haman’s demise, she knew that patience was the right course of action ⁶⁹. This entails, too, that Esther was confident she would recognize the right time to act. Like Abigail, the wise woman of Tekoa, and Bathsheba (in 1 Kings 1, not ch. 2), her intercession is careful, deliberate, and takes time to develop. It is often said that the fortuitous “coincidences” in Esther give the reader the impression that God controls history; whether or not this is the case, they do suggest that *Esther*

⁶⁷ PARKER, *Stories in Scripture*, 3-6.

⁶⁸ PARKER, *Stories in Scripture*, 5.

⁶⁹ Cf. LOADER, “Thoughts on the Succession Narrative and Wisdom”, 178.

is in control of the situation. She waits to accuse Haman until several coincidental turns of events have made him weak and vulnerable.

Propriety (or lack thereof) is a crucial aspect of the female intermediary plot-type. The female intermediary succeeds because of her conduct before the king — Abigail and the wise woman of Tekoa direct the conversation judiciously, and Athiratu and Bathsheba bow (Št-stem ḤWY) before Ilu and David. Nabal, on the other hand, is doomed from the start because of his impropriety. When audiences encountered Mordecai's refusal to bow (Št-stem ḤWY) before Haman (Esth 3,2), they would have felt the impropriety. The audience understands that it should cheer for Mordecai, but senses trouble around the corner because of his actions.

Along the same lines, I think the role of drunkenness in 1 Samuel 25 illuminates Ahashverosh's character. When we read Esther, bearing in mind the potential for drunkenness to accompany foolishness, a number of subtle points stand out. Like Nabal the fool, Ahashverosh is drunk at a feast, and his "heart" is "good" with wine (1 Sam 25,36; Esth 1,10). The book opens with back-to-back feasts in ch. 1; the noun מִשְׁתֶּה means "feast" or "banquet", but in Esther the meaning of the root שתה ("to drink") seems to connote drinking in a festival atmosphere. When the king finds a new queen, he throws another party (Esth 2,18). When his and Haman's ⁷⁰ actions are contrasted negatively with the [appropriate] actions of the rest of Susa, we find him drinking (Esth 3,15) ⁷¹. Esther's plan, which works so brilliantly, hinges on the king (and Haman) attending several private parties. In short, the king enjoys imbibing. We are perhaps warranted to reconstruct the advice of Hegai hinted at in Esth 2,15 ⁷² — *if you are going to bring something to your encounter with the king, bring alcohol*. Perhaps this is why she knows, in Esther 5, to play the king using a series of parties. On the other hand, the Jews also feast after their victory (Esth 9,19,22), and we are not meant to read them as fools.

V. CONCLUSION

Esther shares many notable features with the Baal cycle, 1 Samuel 25, 2 Samuel 14, and 1 Kings 1–2. A model in which these stories belong to a Levantine literary tradition explains the commonalities better than

⁷⁰ Haman is clearly a fool in Esther: he falls into the snare he devises for another — both in the metaphorical sense of his overall scheme, and the actual implement of death (Esth 5,14; 7,9-10); cf. Proverbs throughout, e.g., Prov 1,18.

⁷¹ This mention of Ahashverosh and Haman drinking is not included in the Alpha Text, and overall the prominence of alcohol in the MT is muted in the Alpha Text.

⁷² This phrasing, too, is not present in the Alpha Text.

positing direct relationships between the texts. Though some direct textual dependence and/or intentional allusions may still exist in this reconstruction, the numerous similarities can be explained without the need to postulate literary functions for this or that allusion. The Baal cycle, 1 Samuel 25, 2 Samuel 14, and 1 Kings 1–2 all make use of the *female intermediary* plot-type, and the Baal cycle, 1 Kings 1–2, and Esther also make use of a particular *struggle for power* plot-type. In this model, other stories that made use of the same literary elements probably circulated in the Levant, though they are no longer extant. As such, readers were familiar with the contours and motifs of these plot-types. Though they are not directly connected, comparison of these stories leads to a fuller understanding of each.

The Clarendon Institute
Walton Street
Oxford, UK, OX1 2HG

John SCRENOCK

SUMMARY

Esther shares a number of features with the Baal cycle, 1 Samuel 25, 2 Samuel 14, and 1 Kings 1–2. The similarities between these texts are not necessarily the result of direct literary influence or intentional allusion. I argue that these similarities instead stem from a common Levantine literary tradition. All five texts make use of a literary element I term the *female intermediary* plot-type. Moreover, the Baal cycle, 1 Kings 1–2, and Esther also make use of a particular *struggle for power* plot-type.

REWRITTEN THEOLOGY IN THE GREEK BOOK OF JOB

I. INTRODUCTION ¹

The Old Greek book of Job (the Septuagint of Job), from before Origen's time ², is approximately one-sixth shorter than the Hebrew book of Job (the Masoretic Text of Job) and contains substantial differences in its translation compared with the Hebrew version. To explain the alteration, scholars have claimed that the Greek book of Job depended on an abridged Hebrew *Vorlage* that predates and differs from the MT-Job ³. Therefore, the discrepancies between the LXX-Job and the MT-Job result from the use of a different Hebrew *Vorlage* by the Greek translator. However, the claim that there was another shortened Hebrew *Vorlage* has often been questioned. Rather than claiming the existence of another Hebrew text,

¹ This paper was supported by *Forschungskredit* postdoctoral finance in Universität Zürich (2018), and was presented in the research group "Wisdom in Israelite and Cognate Traditions" of the 2018 Annual Meeting of the SBL (November 17th-20th) held in Denver, USA. Furthermore, I am grateful to the anonymous peer reviewers of *Biblica* for their helpful remarks and comments. I also wish to thank Prof. Dominik Markl for his useful suggestions.

² For the related terminology of the Greek (LXX) Job, I refer to M. WITTE, "The Greek Book of Job", *Das Buch Hiob und seine Interpretationen*. Beiträge zum Hiob-Symposium auf dem Monte Verità vom 14.-19. August 2005 (ATANT 88; Zürich 2007) 33-54, here 33. The translation of the Septuagint in this paper is the NETS translation. See "Iob", *A New English Translation of the Septuagint and the Other Greek Translations Traditionally Included under That Title*. An Essential Resource for Biblical Studies (eds. A. PIETERSMA – B.G. WRIGHT) (New York – Oxford 2007) 667-696. The NETS translation is based on J. ZIEGLER, *Septuaginta*. Vetus Testamentum Graecum Academiae Scientiarum Gottingensis editum XI.4: Iob (Göttingen 1982). For a few variations, refer to P.J. GENTRY, *The Asterisked Materials in the Greek Job* (Atlanta, GA 1995). For the English translation of the MT, I mainly use the ESV ("The English Standard Version") translation.

³ This hypothesis at first was suggested by E. HATCH, *Essays in Biblical Greek*. Studies on the Value and Use of the Septuagint, on the Meanings of Words and Psychological Terms in Biblical Greek, on Quotations from the Septuagint, on Origen's Revision of Job, and on the Text of Ecclesiasticus, with an Index of Biblical Passages (Eugene, OR 2004) 215-245, originally published in 1889 by Clarendon at Oxford. For more extensive commentary, see H.M. ORLINSKY, "Studies in the Septuagint of the Book of Job [Pt 1]", *HUCA* 28 (1957) 53-74; IDEM, "Studies in the Septuagint of the Book of Job [Pt 2]", *HUCA* 29 (1958) 229-271; IDEM, "Studies in the Septuagint of the Book of Job [Pt 3]", *HUCA* 30 (1959) 153-167; IDEM, "Studies in the Septuagint of the Book of Job [Pt 4.1]", *HUCA* 32 (1961) 239-268; IDEM, "Studies in the Septuagint of the book of Job IV: The present state of the Greek text of Job", *HUCA* 33 (1962) 119-151; IDEM, "Studies in the Septuagint of the book of Job V: The Hebrew *Vorlage* of the Book of Job", *HUCA* 35 (1964) 57-78; IDEM, "Studies in the Septuagint of the book of Job: The *Kethib* and the *Qere*", *HUCA* 36 (1965) 37-47.

scholars have argued that such a Hebrew *Vorlage* is not greatly different from the original MT of the book of Job and that the translator simply altered the Hebrew version of Job to suit the concerns of his day⁴. The mediating position among competing viewpoints on the discrepancies between the two versions is suggested by Johann Cook from the analysis of Job 28: while those differences come from the shorter Hebrew *Vorlage*, they are attributed to the interests and concerns of the Greek translator⁵.

Needless to say, determining the reason for the discrepancy between the Hebrew and Greek versions of Job is a difficult task. We do not know how many Hebrew manuscripts he used, nor what sort of literary or oral texts might have influenced him. Because the MT-Job probably went through several redactions, one should not easily dismiss the possibility that the Greek translator knew other Hebrew versions. Even without inspiration from multiple sources, he may have made the dramatic changes in the text on the basis of his exegetical intentions. In my view, the composition of the LXX-Job should be understood as a revision of the original Hebrew Job, which was very much like the MT-Job; this does not exclude the possibility that the translator was familiar with a Hebrew *Vorlage*. By detailing how the Greek Job changes the figure of Job and the depiction of God in contrast to what is found in the Hebrew book of Job, this essay will provide fresh perspectives on the LXX revision.

II. THEOLOGICAL CHANGES IN THE GREEK BOOK OF JOB

Do the editorial subtractions and additions of the LXX-Job from the Hebrew Job come primarily from stylistic, linguistic, and philological

⁴ C.E. COX, "Job", *T&T Clark Companion to the Septuagint* (ed. J.K. AITKEN) (London – New York 2015) 385-400, here 390, explains the shortening of Job from Hebrew to Greek without alleging another Hebrew *Vorlage*, arguing that the Greek version "was intended for the Jewish community that read it, not for the broader Greek world, Alexandrian, Egyptian or beyond". See further H. HEATER, Jr., *A Septuagint Translation Technique in the Book of Job* (CBQM 11; Washington, DC 1982) 131; M. KÜCHLER, "Gott und seine Weisheit in der Septuaginta (Ijob 28; Spr 8)", *Monotheismus und Christologie. Zur Gottesfrage im hellenistischen Judentum und im Urchristentum* (eds. H.-J. KLAUCK – J. GNILKA) (Quaestiones disputatae 138; Freiburg im Breisgau – Basel 1992) 118-143; N.F. MARCOS, "The Septuagint Reading of the Book of Job", *The Book of Job* (Louvain 1994) 251-266. See also J.M. ECKSTEIN, "The Idiolect Test and the *Vorlage* of Old Greek Job: A New Argument for an Old Debate", *VT* 68 (2018) 197-219, here 206. By using the Idiolect Test, Eckstein insists that "the hypothesis of an older state of the Hebrew text in terms of 'the short *Vorlage* for OG Job' should be rejected.

⁵ J. COOK, "Aspects of Wisdom in the Texts of Job (Chapter 28) — 'Vorlage(n)' and/or Translator(s)?"", *OTE* 5 (1992) 26-45; IDEM, "A Theology of the Septuagint?", *OTE* 30 (2017) 265-282.

issues or from exegetical and theological interests? Henry Gehman argues that the translator of the LXX-Job, especially in chapters 1–15, followed a Hebrew text not much different from the MT-Job, revising it to fit the tendencies of the Alexandrian school, but going far beyond what was required by literary concerns ⁶. Donald Gard likewise supposes that the Hebrew *Vorlage* of the LXX-Job is similar to the original MT-Job and that the character of Job in the Greek version is more “saintly” than that of the MT-Job ⁷. Johanne Cook recently traced the “theological topoi” in the Old Greek of Job that are distinct from the MT-Job ⁸. Claude Cox observes that the Greek translator leaves “the exegetical clues reflective of its place of origin” ⁹. On the other hand, Harry Orlinsky, among others, claims that the changes made by the redactor represent stylistic differences rather than theological concerns ¹⁰. Natalio Marcos similarly argues that the revisions were made by the translator because of “the difficulty of understanding a great part of the text” ¹¹. Markus Witte also maintains that “the abridgements are not the result of a continuously conscious theological editorial intention which systematically deleted the anthropomorphisms in the notion of God or would have defused Job’s charges against God”, and that the translator either did not accurately comprehend the Hebrew text or did not have an intact manuscript ¹². Although Witte agrees

⁶ H.S. GEHMAN, “The Theological Approach of the Greek Translator of Job 1–15”, *JBL* 68 (1949) 231–240.

⁷ D.H. GARD, “The Concept of Job’s Character According to the Greek Translator of the Hebrew Text”, *JBL* 72 (1953) 182–186.

⁸ According to J. COOK, “Towards a ‘Theology’ of the Old Greek Text of Job”, *BETL* 269 (2014) 353–362, the theological development of the LXX-Job contains “the sovereignty of God”, “creational perspective” (ch. 28), “resurrection and life” (ch. 42), and “possible Sadducean theological perspectives”.

⁹ COX, “Job”, 394; C.E. COX, “The Historical, Social, and Literary Context of Old Greek Job”, *XII Congress of the International Organization for Septuagint and Cognate Studies, Leiden, 2004* (ed. M.K.H. PETERS) (Leiden – Boston, MA 2006) 105–116.

¹⁰ ORLINSKY, “Studies in the Septuagint of the Book of Job [Pt 1]”; IDEM, “Studies in the Septuagint of the Book of Job [Pt 2]”; IDEM, “Studies in the Septuagint of the Book of Job [Pt 3]”; IDEM, “Studies in the Septuagint of the Book of Job [Pt 4.1]”; IDEM, “Studies in the Septuagint of the Book of Job IV”; IDEM, “Studies in the Septuagint of the Book of Job V”.

¹¹ MARCOS, “The Septuagint Reading of the Book of Job”, 255.

¹² WITTE, “The Greek Book of Job”, 37, argues that the translator is “essentially responsible for the shortening of the source text”, increased omissions in the progress of the book, omissions in difficult parts, reduced redundancies in chs. 32–37, and omissions interfering with “the poetic structure”. It is noticed that “the ‘omissions’ occur with greater frequency in the sections of the Hebrew book of Job determined secondary on a source critical basis. Witte also mentions that “the translation was also a result of dictation”. See also M. KEPPEL – M. WITTE, “Job. Das Buch Ijob/Hiob”, *Septuaginta Deutsch. Erläuterungen und Kommentare zum griechischen Alten Testament* (ed. M. KARRER) (Stuttgart 2011) 2041–2126.

that some differences may derive from both literary and theological perspectives, he does not believe that the bulk of the discrepancies were deliberately introduced by the redactor.

In this essay, I will argue that the translational disagreements and variations between the Hebrew and the Greek Job should be attributed to the theology of the Greek translator¹³. Although the LXX-Job shows the substantial influence of Greek thought and literature¹⁴, I do not believe that the distinctiveness of the Greek version reflects solely an accommodation to Hellenistic culture without any influence from Jewish religious ideas¹⁵. We should bear in mind that some of the distinctive elements in the Greek Job come from later additions that are inconsistent with the original framework of the Septuagint. For example, notions of “afterlife” and “resurrection” in the Greek version (Job 14,7-14; 19,25-26; 42,17) are not well-developed. The only reference to resurrection in 42,17a does not belong to the original Greek text but is a later addition¹⁶. Nevertheless, even though the original Greek translator consciously or unconsciously

¹³ G. GERLEMAN, *Studies in the Septuagint* (Lunds Universitets årsskrift. N.F. Avd. 1; Lund 1946) Bd. 43, Nr. 2-3; Bd. 52, Nr. 3, 33-34; GEHMAN, “The Theological Approach of the Greek Translator”; WITTE, “The Greek Book of Job”; COOK, “Towards a ‘Theology’ of the Old Greek Text of Job”; COX, “Job”.

¹⁴ For connections of the LXX-Job with ancient Greek literature and culture, see J.G. GAMMIE, “The Septuagint of Job: its Poetic Style and Relationship to the Septuagint of Proverbs”, *CBQ* 49 (1987) 14-31; C.K. REGGIANI, “La Figura di Giobbe in tre Documenti del Giudaismo Ellenistico”, *VC* 36 (1999) 165-192; COX, “The Historical, Social, and Literary Context of Old Greek Job”, 111-114.

¹⁵ Variations are frequently regarded as “Septuagintalism”, namely that the translator referred to generally used expressions in the Septuagint’s translation. See M. DHONT, “The Cultural Outlook Of Old Greek Job: A Reassessment of the Notion of Hellenization”, *Die Septuaginta — Geschichte, Wirkung, Relevanz*. 6. Internationale Fachtagung veranstaltet von Septuaginta Deutsch (LXX.D), Wuppertal 21.-24. Juli 2016 (ed. M. MEISER) (WUNT 405; Tübingen 2018) 618-630, here 629-630, points out the exaggeration of the “Hellenization” of the OG-Job and suggests its relationship between them should be seen as “mutual exchange to describe the complex socio-cultural interactions”.

¹⁶ MARCOS, “The Septuagint Reading of the Book of Job”, 265; A. VAN DER KOOIJ, “Ideas about Afterlife in the Septuagint”, *Lebendige Hoffnung, ewiger Tod?! Jenseitsvorstellungen im Hellenismus, Judentum und Christentum* (eds. M. LABAHN – M. LANG) (Leipzig 2007) 90-104, here 95; J. COOK, “The Profile and Some Theological Aspects of the Old Greek of Job — Resurrection and Life after Death as Points in Case”, *OTE* 24 (2011) 324-345, here 342; IDEM, “Towards a ‘Theology’ of the Old Greek Text of Job”, 359-360. For the opposing view, see D.H. GARD, “The Concept of the Future Life according to the Greek Translator of the Book of Job”, *JBL* 73 (1954) 137-143; GEHMAN, “The Theological Approach of the Greek Translator”, 238; A.Y. REED, “Job as Jobab: the Interpretation of Job in LXX Job 42:17b-e”, *JBL* 120 (2001) 31-55; J. SCHNOCKS, “The Hope for Resurrection in the Book of Job”, *The Septuagint and Messianism* (ed. M.A. KNIBB) (Leuven – Dudley 2006) 291-299. Recently, T. HÄNER, “The Exegetical Function of the Additions to Old Greek Job (42,17a-e)”, *Biblica* 100 (2019) 34-49, claims that the Greek addition in Job 42,17a-e concerning Job’s resurrection and identity as the descendant of Abraham was added by the canonization of clarifying equivocal passages.

acted on his own intellectual interests and translational conventions in his writing, the major reason for changes he made should not be attributed to his literary technique but to his theological concerns¹⁷. This does not mean that the theology of the Greek Job is in opposition to that of the MT-Job. Both the Hebrew and Greek versions equally raise particular issues such as innocent suffering, justice, evil, and God's power. However, in many places, the translator of the Greek Job appears to have intentionally changed Hebrew words and expressions in order to soften the accusations made against God and to minimise doubt concerning the world order.

III. TORAH-CENTERED PIETY

One of the dominant themes which unite the Hebrew Job and the LXX-Job is the preservation of personal piety in spite of human suffering. While the dialogue in the Hebrew version provides a somewhat antagonistic figure who protests against the incomprehensible experience of human suffering, the Greek version presents Job more favourably¹⁸.

1. *Religious Job*

Firstly, the LXX-Job makes Job look more devoted to religious values than the Hebrew version does¹⁹. For instance, the Greek text in the Prologue adds to the list of Job's characteristic that he was "righteous" (δικαίος), and it rephrases the notion of God-fearer as a "pious" (θεοσεβής) person (1,1.8; 2,3)²⁰:

וְהָיָה הָאִישׁ הַהוּא תָם וְיָשָׁר וְיָרָא אֱלֹהִים וְסָר מֵרָע

And that man was blameless and upright, one who feared God and turned away from evil. (ESV 1,1b)

¹⁷ For instance, earthly materials in the Hebrew text of Job 28 are substantially removed (vv. 5, 6, 7, 8, 14-17, 18-19), and, in particular, the mining business in vv. 3-4 is spiritualized along with the immoral consequence of unrighteous deeds. See COOK, "'Vorlage(n)' and/or translator(s)?" , 41-42.

¹⁸ GARD, "The Concept of Job's Character According to the Greek Translator of the Hebrew Text". Recently, M. KARRER, "Job, der Gerechte : Beobachtungen zum Hiobbuch der Septuaginta", *Die Septuaginta — Geschichte, Wirkung, Relevanz*. 6. internationale Fachtagung veranstaltet von Septuaginta Deutsch (LXX.D), Wuppertal 21.-24. Juli 2016 (ed. M. MEISER) (WUNT 405; Tübingen 2018) 66-89, here 89, concludes: "Das Interesse an der Plausibilisierung mindert die Aufmerksamkeit für einen Schmerz und eine Not, die alle rationale Klärung überschreiten".

¹⁹ WITTE, "The Greek Book of Job", 48-50.

²⁰ Job's first response to the disaster in the Greek Job adds: "as it seemed good to the Lord, so it turned out" (1,21). WITTE, "The Greek Book of Job", 49.

Καὶ ἦν ὁ ἄνθρωπος ἐκεῖνος ἀληθινός, ἄμεμπτος, δίκαιος, θεοσεβής, ἀπεχόμενος ἀπὸ παντὸς πονηροῦ πράγματος.

And that man was genuine, blameless, righteous, religious, staying away from every evil thing. (NETS 1,1b)

The figure of Job as a righteous man is also highlighted concerning his righteous “works” (11,4; 13,27). This, as Markus Witte argues, may “tie in with the Jewish-Hellenistic ideal of piety where the Torah is the standard for righteousness”²¹. Also, while Job in the Prologue of the Hebrew text is described as a “servant” (עֶבֶד), the Greek Job calls him παῖς in 1,8, and later on a θεράπων (“attendant”) in 2,3, which according to Arie van der Kooij refers to the “confidant attendant” of a king²². The reproach of Job’s wife to her husband is expanded in the Greek version (2,9a-e)²³, highlighting Job’s religious piety.

The Hebrew Job pays no attention to the priestly cult of sacrifices and rituals of purification in response to individual suffering²⁴. By contrast, the Greek translator inserts the phrase καὶ μόσχον ἕνα περὶ ἁμαρτίας περὶ τῶν ψυχῶν αὐτῶν (“one bull calf as a sin offering for their souls”, 1,5), probably derived from the book of Leviticus, which portrays Job acting as a priest²⁵. In the Epilogue of the Greek version, Job is portrayed not only as an intercessor but also as the one who forgives the sins of his friends (42,10).

The additional material (42,17) in the ending of the LXX-Job that refers to a Syrian or Aramaic source suggests a Hellenistic understanding of Job’s character²⁶. The Gentile Job here is identified with the Edomite king Jobab, the son of Zerah (Job 42,17b; Gen 36,33). Verse 42,17c inserts Jobab into the history of Israel as a member of the fifth generation of the descendants of Abraham (Gen 36,9-19; esp. 36,17). As Annette Reed

²¹ WITTE, “The Greek Book of Job”, 49 insists that “the theme of the ‘righteous Job’ is highlighted throughout the whole Greek version of the book”. For instance, in MT-Job, Job calls for God’s vindication: “Turn now; my vindication is at stake” (6:29b). In contrast, in the Greek Job, the reference is to one who is δίκαιος: “gather again with him who is just (πάλιν τῷ δίκαιῳ συνέρχεσθε)”.

²² A. VAN DER KOOIJ, “Servant or Slave?: The Various Equivalents of Hebrew ‘*‘ebed*’ in the Septuagint of the Pentateuch”, *XIII Congress of the International Organization for Septuagint and Cognate Studies, Ljubljana, 2007* (ed. M.K.H. PETERS) (Atlanta, GA 2008) 225-238. Also see J. COOK, “Are the Additions in LXX Job 2,9a-e to Be Deemed as the Old Greek Text?”, *Biblica* 91 (2010) 275-284, here 283.

²³ COOK, “Are the Additions in LXX Job 2,9a-e to Be Deemed as the Old Greek Text?”, 280, 283.

²⁴ J.J. KWON, “Divergence of the Book of Job from Deuteronomic/Priestly Torah: Inter-textual Reading between Job and Torah”, *SJOT* 32 (2018) 49-71, here 66-70.

²⁵ WITTE, “The Greek Book of Job”, 50; COX, “Job”, 396.

²⁶ REED, “Job as Jobab”, 31-32.

argues, identifying Job as Jobab, who is “an Idumean convert to Judaism”, may reflect the conversion of devout Gentiles to Judaism during the Greco-Roman period ²⁷.

2. *Job, the Law-breaker*

The Greek Job not only reformulates Job’s character as a pious man but also covers up Job’s violations of Torah ²⁸. Although Job’s innocence is confirmed by the Lord in Job 42,7-10 (LXX), in the passages in which Job’s friends accuse Job, the translator leaves out the evidence of Job’s violation of the Law, which would make Job responsible for causing his own suffering. For instance, when Elihu rebukes Job’s excessive blame of God and condemns Job’s impious words in 34,17-18, the Hebrew text reports that Job said that God “hates justice” (שׁוֹנֵא מִשְׁפָּט), is in no way worthy of ruling the world, and is the one who says “to a king, ‘worthless one’ (בְּלִיעַל), and to nobles, ‘wicked one’ (רָשָׁע)”. By contrast, the Greek revision asserts that God “hates lawless acts” (τὸν μισοῦντα ἄνομα) in 34,17, and in v. 18 Elihu speaks of the “impious” person (ἄσεβής) who recklessly says to a king that “you are acting lawlessly (παρανομεῖς)” ²⁹.

הָאֵף שׁוֹנֵא מִשְׁפָּט יַחְבוּשׁ וְאִם-צָדִיק כְּבִיר תִּרְשִׁיעַ
הָאֵמַר לַמֶּלֶךְ בְּלִיעַל רָשָׁע אֶל-נְדִיבִים

¹⁷ Shall one who hates justice govern? Will you condemn him who is righteous and mighty, ¹⁸ who says to a king, ‘Worthless one,’ and to nobles, ‘Wicked man,’ (ESV 34,17-18)

¹⁷ ἰδὲ σὺ τὸν μισοῦντα ἄνομα καὶ τὸν ὀλλύντα τοὺς πονηροὺς ὄντα αἰώνιον δίκαιον. ¹⁸ ἄσεβής ὁ λέγων βασιλεῖ Παρανομεῖς, * ἄσεβέστατε τοῖς ἄρχουσιν .

¹⁷ Look then at him that hates lawless acts and destroys the wicked, since he is forever just. ¹⁸ Impious is he who says to a king, ‘You are acting lawlessly,’ — [* to rulers, ‘O most impious’.] (NETS 34,17-18)

The selection of Greek words such as ἄνομος (“lawless”), ἄσεβής (“impious”, “ungodly”), and παρανομέω (“break the law”) converts the demand

²⁷ Regarding the geographical description of “the borders of Idumea and Arabia”, Annette Reed insists that “if composed after the Idumean conversion in 112/111 BCE, the identification of Job with the Edomite Jobab may function to place Job “as an Idumean convert to Judaism”. REED, “Job as Jobab”, 44, 53.

²⁸ KWON, “Divergence of the Book of Job from Deuteronomical/Priestly Torah”, argues that the Hebrew Job at some points does not subscribe to the Deuteronomi(sti)c ideology in the Torah. Also see COX, “Job”, 395-396.

²⁹ In the book of Job, the Greek verb παρανομέω (“to act contrary to the law”) only appears in this verse, and elsewhere in the Greek Bible only in Pss 25,4; 70,4; 74,5; 118,51; 4 Mac 5,17.20.27; 8,14; Sol 16,8.

for justice in the Hebrew Job from God's unfair treatment of an innocent man to the punishment of sins against the Law (cf. 5,22a; 12,5; 35,14)³⁰. The LXX text of Job 34,18 substitutes an impious man for God, the subject of the verb in Hebrew, so that Elihu is accusing Job of assaulting the king's dignity with blasphemous words, because the king is a representation of a deity.

Elihu's speech in the Hebrew version of 34,27 condemns evildoers who "turned aside from following him" (סרו מאחריו) and "had no regard for any of his ways", (כל־דרכיו לא השכילו). The Greek version replaces the "path" imagery of מאחריו and כל־דרכיו with law-related words, so that it stresses those "who broke God's law" (ἐξέκλιναν ἐκ νόμου θεοῦ) and "did not recognize his commandments" (δικαιώματα ... αὐτοῦ οὐκ ἐπέγνωσαν; cf. Deut 30,16):

אשר על־כן סרו מאחריו וכל־דרכיו לא השכילו

because they turned aside from following him and had no regard for any of his ways (ESV 34,27)

ὅτι ἐξέκλιναν ἐκ νόμου θεοῦ δικαιώματα δὲ αὐτοῦ οὐκ ἐπέγνωσαν

because they turned aside from God's law and his requirements they did not recognize (NETS 34,27)

The Greek book of Job consistently identifies wrongdoing as a violation of divine νόμος, especially in the apparently unlawful behaviour of Job³¹. The Greek Job indicts law-breakers by utilizing the adverb *παρνόμως* ("lawlessly") in 34,20 and the verbal form *ἀνομέω* ("act lawlessly") instead of פשע in 35,6.

In Eliphaz's first speech in the Hebrew text, when the sage reminds Job of the ultimate punishment of the wicked, he uses the expression נשמה ("breathing") of אלוה to portray God's wrath against humans (4,9a). While Eliphaz's intention was to encourage him by foretelling that because of his pious life and integrity Job will be restored, while the wicked will perish, Eliphaz indirectly calls Job's integrity into question by comparing the catastrophes in his life to the fate of the wicked. The Greek translator replaces נשמה אלוה with κυρίου ἀπολοῦνται (4,9a, "by the command of the Lord", NETS), which is closer to the meaning of the ordinance according to תורה (Prov 14,27; cf. Exod 18,16.20). Consequently, Eliphaz's rhetoric in LXX 4,9 treats Job's misfortunes as just punishment for his offenses against תורה.

³⁰ Cox, "Job", 395.

³¹ Cox, "Job", 395-396.

The changes introduced in the Greek version present Job as a law-abiding and devout man who nevertheless violated the teaching of the Torah. In order to suppress Job's accusation in the Hebrew text that the moral order is absurd, the Greek revision implies that Job's suffering comes from disobedience to God's will as revealed in the Mosaic code. This may well represent the convictions of the translator's Hellenistic Jewish community about the source of their own suffering.

3. *The Omnipotence of God*

Compared with the Hebrew text, the Septuagint softens Job's hostile description of God and strengthens the depiction of God as an omnipotent creator while at the same time using a kind of demythologization to defend God from the charge that the evil of innocent suffering in the created order means that God is unjust.

a. Reduction of the hostility against God

Firstly, it is noticeable that the Greek Job attempts to reduce expressions of hostility against God. It is known that Job's speeches in chapters 3–31 indict his God³² for assaulting him “without purpose” (חנם; διὰ κενῆς [“for no reason”]; cf. 2,3; 9,17; δωρεάν in 1,9). Job experiences God's enmity in his bodily suffering. In the Hebrew text of Job 16,13–14 (cf. 3,20), God's personal responsibility for Job's condition is indicated by use of the third person singular, while the Greek uses the third person plural to suggest that other agents are involved: “they surrounded”, “they poured out”, “they threw me down, fall upon fall”, and “they rushed”³³. This substitution of “they” for “he” casts God's agency into the background:

יסבו עלי רביו יפלו כליותי ולא יחמול ישפך לארץ מררתי
פרצני פרץ על-פני-פרץ ירץ עלי כגבור

¹³ His archers surround me. He slashes open my kidneys and does not spare; he pours out my gall on the ground. ¹⁴ He breaks me with breach upon breach; he runs upon me like a warrior. (ESV 16,13–14)

¹³ ἐκύκλωσάν με λόγχοις βάλλοντες εἰς νεφρούς μου οὐ φειδόμενοι, ἐξέχεαν εἰς τὴν γῆν τὴν χολήν μου ¹⁴κατέβαλόν με πτώμα ἐπὶ πτώματι, ἔδραμον πρὸς με δυνάμενοι.

³² F.R. MAGDALENE, *On the Scales of Righteousness*. Neo-Babylonian Trial Law and the Book of Job (Providence, RI 2007) argues that the book of Job employs the language of Neo-Babylonian litigation documents during the 7th to the 5th centuries BCE.

³³ GEHMAN, “The Theological Approach of the Greek Translator”; GARD, “The Concept of Job's Character According to the Greek Translator of the Hebrew Text”, 182–183.

¹³ They surrounded me with spears, hurling them into my kidneys, without sparing; they poured out my gall on the ground. ¹⁴ They threw me down, fall upon fall; they rushed at me powerfully. (NETS 16,13-14)

In Job's indictments, the term אֱלֹהִים in the Hebrew version is often deleted (9,13; 24,12) or else replaced by "the Lord" (ὁ κύριος, 6,9; 10,2; 19,6; 22,17) ³⁴.

The translator does not wholly remove the "anthropomorphism" of God in Job's speeches. For instance, concerning the divine enmity against Job's physical wellbeing that is articulated in a variety of poetic metaphors in the Hebrew version (6,4; 6,9; 16,7; 30,19.21), the LXX-Job retains those descriptions. Yet, the direct accusation against God in several places of the LXX-Job are made more obscure (9,12-13; 16,11; 19,22) ³⁵. The anger of Job against God's unfair treatment of him is subdued in the Greek. For instance, the claim that God "snatches" (יִחַתֵּךְ) things from his creatures makes him seem like "a robber" (cf. Prov 23,28), while the Greek version treats this as if it were hypothetical rather than a real event: "if he takes away" (ἐάν ἀπαλλάξῃ).

b. Demythologization and creation

Secondly, the LXX-Job pays more attention to God's omnipotence than the Hebrew version (10,13; 13,15) ³⁶. When the Hebrew Job in 10,13 speaks of the hidden things in God's heart, this refers to the divine oppression and injustice that lead Job to accuse God of malice toward him (cf. 10,2-3). The translator turns this into a pious act of faith:

ואלה צפנת בלבבך ידעתי כִּי־זאת עמך

Yet these things you hid in your heart; I know that this was your purpose. (ESV 10,13)

Ταῦτα ἔχων ἐν σεαυτῷ οἶδα ὅτι πάντα δύνασαι, ἀδυνατεῖ δέ σοι οὐθέν.

Since you have these things in you, I know that you can do anything, and nothing is impossible for you. (NETS 10,13)

Similarly, the Hebrew phrase, ולא־יבצר ממך מזמנה ("no purpose of yours can be thwarted", 42,2b), states that the divine purpose is in no way disturbed and withdrawn. This comes from Job's disheartened despair when confronted by the revelation of divine power. Job's statement in the Greek,

³⁴ WITTE, "The Greek Book of Job", 50.

³⁵ WITTE, "The Greek Book of Job", 51-52; GARD, "The Concept of Job's Character According to the Greek Translator of the Hebrew Text", 183-184; MARCOS, "The Septuagint Reading of the Book of Job", 260.

³⁶ WITTE, "The Greek Book of Job", 51.

ἀδυνατεῖ δέ σοι οὐθέν (“nothing is impossible for you”), is understood as a more confident confession about divine power (42,2) ³⁷.

ידעת כִּי־כָל תּוּכַל וְלֹא־יִבְצָר מִמֶּךָ מוֹמָה

I know that you can do all things, and that no purpose of yours can be thwarted. (ESV 42,2)

Οἶδα ὅτι πάντα δύνασαι, ἀδυνατεῖ δέ σοι οὐθέν.

I know that you can do anything, and nothing is impossible for you. (NETS 42,2)

The literary strategy of the Greek translator of focusing on divine omnipotence demythologizes specific Hebrew words. In many places, the mythological imagery of the MT version is diminished, although the associations with Greek mythology do not completely disappear ³⁸. For instance, לִי־תָן (“Leviathan”, 3,8) is replaced by μέγα κῆτος (“a great whale”); כּוֹכַב (kūkab, “star”, 3,9a; 9,7; 25,5; 38,7) by ἄστρον (“the star”) ³⁹; בְּנֵי־רֶשֶׁף (“sons of Resheph”, 5,7) by νεοσσοὶ δὲ γυπὸς (“the vulture’s young”) ⁴⁰; תַּנִּין (“Tanin”, 7,12) by δράκων (“dragon”); and עֲזָרֵי רַהַב (“the helpers of Rahab”, 9,13) by κήτη τὰ ὑπ’ οὐρανόν (“huge fishes under heaven”).

Besides weakening connections with Greek myths, the LXX-Job strengthens the image of God as Creator of the world. In YHWH’s first speech in the MT-Job, although there are descriptions of the world’s structure (38,4-21), elements of world’s function (38,22-33), and examples drawn from the animal world (38,39 – 39,30), the literary purpose of YHWH’s first speech is connected to the divine control over the world, rather than to the act of creation itself. Similarly, in the LXX-Job, the theme is sustained in a broader context but is demythologized in many specific details.

While the Hebrew text in 38,7 speaks of the “singing” (רִנָּן) of the “morning stars” (כּוֹכְבֵי בֹקֶר), an image derived from a Canaanite myth from Ras Shamra ⁴¹, and mentions the “shouting” (רוע) of “all the sons of God” (כָּל־בְּנֵי אֱלֹהִים), this certainly implies a polytheistic worldview. These Hebrew words are replaced with the birth of “stars” (ἄστρον) and the worship by YHWH’s angels (ἄγγελοι) in the Greek version:

³⁷ MARCOS, “The Septuagint Reading of the Book of Job”, 260.

³⁸ MARCOS, “The Septuagint Reading of the Book of Job”, 257.

³⁹ J. GRAY, *The Book of Job* (ed. D.J.A. CLINES) (Sheffield 2010) 142. The phrase עַפְעַפ־שָׁחַר (“the eyelids of the morning”; 3:9b), which is a reflection of Canaanite mythology, is rephrased as “the morning star” (ἑωσφόρος), which is found in Greek mythology; see WITTE, “The Greek Book of Job”, 39. כּוֹכַב is removed in the Greek Job 22,12.

⁴⁰ GRAY, *Job*, 160.

⁴¹ GRAY, *Job*, 459.

בְּרִיחַד כּוֹכְבֵי בֹקֶר וִירֵעוּ כָּל־בְּנֵי אֱלֹהִים

When the morning stars sang together and all the sons of God shouted for joy? (ESV 38,7)

ὅτε ἐγενήθησαν ἄστρα, ἤνεσάν με φωνῇ μεγάλῃ πάντες ἄγγελοί μου.

When the stars were born, all my angels praised me with a loud voice. (NETS 38,7)

In the Hebrew version of YHWH's speech, though Behemoth (בהמות; θηρίον ["wild animal"], LXX/MT Job 40,15) and Leviathan (לִיָּתָן, MT 41,1; δράκων, LXX 40,25) have the characteristics of both mythological figures and real animals, they are associated with Egyptian and Canaanite mythology⁴². Their descriptions in the Greek book of Job are, however, altered in several places. In the portrayal of Behemoth, the LXX-Job in 40,19a replaces "He is the first of the works of God" (ראשית דרכי-אל) in the Hebrew version by "the chief of what the Lord created" (ἀρχὴ πλάσματος κυρίου). The Hebrew author presents images of fearless and valiant monsters, but in the Greek both Behemoth and Leviathan are mocked by ἀγγέλων αὐτοῦ ("his angels")⁴³ in 40,19b and 41,25b [Eng. 41,33b]:

הוא ראשית דרכי-אל העשו יגש חרבו

He is the first of the works (in MT: "ways") of God; let him who made him bring near his sword! (ESV 40,19)

τοῦτ' ἔστιν ἀρχὴ πλάσματος κυρίου πεποιημένον ἐγκαταπαίξεσθαι ὑπὸ τῶν ἀγγέλων αὐτοῦ

This is the chief of what the Lord created, made to be mocked at by his angels. (NETS 40,19)

⁴² O. KEEL, *Jahwes Entgegnung an Ijob*. Eine Deutung von Ijob 38-41 vor dem Hintergrund der zeitgenössischen Bildkunst (FRLANT 121; Göttingen 1978); J. DAY, *God's Conflict with the Dragon and the Sea*. Echoes of a Canaanite Myth in the Old Testament (UCOP 35; Cambridge 1985); C. UEHLINGER, "Drachen und Drachenkämpfe im alten Vorderen Orient und in der Bibel", *Auf Drachenspuren*. ein Buch zum Drachenprojekt des Hamburgischen Museums für Völkerkunde (ed. B. SCHMELZ) (Bonn 1995) 55-101. Concerning the theological change of Job 40 in the Hellenistic context, see K. USENER, "Hiob 40 LXX als theologische Interpretation der hebräischen Vorlage", *Die Septuaginta — Geschichte, Wirkung, Relevanz*. 6. Internationale Fachtagung veranstaltet von Septuaginta Deutsch (LXX.D), Wuppertal 21.-24. Juli 2016 (ed. M. MEISER) (WUNT 405; Tübingen 2018) 50-65.

⁴³ For the angelology in Job, see J.G. GAMMIE, "The Angelology and Demonology in the Septuagint of the Book of Job", *HUCA* 56 (1985) 1-19; W.A. WHITE, "A Devil in the Making: Isomorphism and Exegesis in OG Job 1:8b", *Septuagint Research*. Issues and Challenges in the Study of the Greek Jewish Scriptures (Atlanta, GA 2006) 145-156; M. CIMOSA — G. BONNEY, "Angels, Demons and the Devil in the Book of Job (LXX)", *Die Septuaginta — Texte, Theologien, Einflüsse*. 2. Internationale Fachtagung veranstaltet von Septuaginta Deutsch (LXX.D), Wuppertal 23.-27.7.2008 (Tübingen 2010) 543-561. As Gammie points out, the demonology in Job is hardly developed when compared to "1 Enoch, the Testament of the Twelve Patriarchs and Jubilees" (p. 19).

אֵין-עַל-עֶפֶר מִשְׁלוֹ הָעֵשׂוֹ לְבִלִּי-חַת

On earth there is not his like, a creature without fear. (MT 41,25 [ESV 41,33])

Οὐκ ἔστιν οὐδέν ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς ὅμοιον αὐτῷ πεποιημένον ἐγκαταπαίξεσθαι ὑπὸ τῶν ἀγγέλων μου

There is nothing on earth like it, made to be mocked at by my angels (NETS 41,25)

In the Hebrew version of Job 41,17, “Leviathan” is portrayed as a mythological being, whose actions invoke the fear among “gods” (אֱלֹהִים). By contrast, אֱלֹהִים in the Greek version is omitted, and the fear by the beast appears among “quadrupeds” (θηρίοις τετράποσιν)⁴⁴:

מִשְׁתּוֹ יִגְרוּ אֱלֹהִים מִשְׁבָּרִים יִתְחַטְּאוּ

When he raises himself up, the mighty (or gods) are afraid; at the crashing they are beside themselves. (MT 41,17 [ESV 41,25])

Στραφέντος δὲ αὐτοῦ φόβος θηρίοις τετράποσιν ἐπὶ γῆς ἀλλομένοις.

When it turns, fear takes hold of the quadrupeds jumping upon the earth. (NETS 41,17)

In the Hebrew version of 41,26 (Eng. 41,34), Leviathan is “king over all the sons of proud beasts” (מֶלֶךְ עַל-כָּל-בְּנֵי-שַׁחַץ); in the Greek text (41,26), he is only “king over all that are in the waters” (βασιλεὺς πάντων τῶν ἐν τοῖς ὕδασι).

In general, the theological meaning of the MT-Job does not closely resemble the priestly theme that highlights the creation order and the central role of humans (Gen 1,1 – 2,3a)⁴⁵, but instead emphasizes the power and control of the Creator. The Greek translator does accommodate the creation motif in his writing when he portrays mythological beings as creatures made by God.

IV. CONCLUSION

Overall, the LXX-Job attempts to give a more reasonable answer to Jewish readers during the Roman-Hellenistic period about the issue of injustice, while the MT-Job is scarcely concerned with defending God’s role in the reality of evil. While the MT version emphasizes Job’s righteousness, the Greek version suggests that he may be a law-breaker. Another theological alteration in the LXX-Job occurs in the amplification of God’s

⁴⁴ MARCOS, “The Septuagint Reading of the Book of Job”, 257-258.

⁴⁵ KWON, “Divergence of the Book of Job from Deuteronomic/Priestly Torah”, 63-70.

omnipotence in the world and, in particular, in the reformulation of mythological figures within the creation motif. God is not only the sovereign of the universe but also the one who created the world from the beginning. The translator of the Greek book of Job is more devoted to the religious value of the Law and recolours the image of God in creation theology. With these changes, the translator attempts to resolve the theological problem of suffering and evil in his own day.

Université de Lausanne
Jiseong.Kwon@unil.ch

JiSeong J. KWON

SUMMARY

The Greek version of Job (the LXX-Job) is one-sixth shorter than the MT-Job. It is not just a translation of the Masoretic text, but also reinterprets the tradition of Job and contextualizes it for a broad audience in Hellenistic Alexandria. The later version sidesteps theologically sensitive issues by omitting and reworking passages of the Hebrew Job, downplaying Job's antagonism toward God. This article argues that the changes made by the Greek translator reflect his theological concerns about the value of obeying Torah and about the omnipotence of God.

QOHELET IN HIS CONTEXT: ECCLESIASTES 4,13-16 AND THE DATING OF THE BOOK

I. INTRODUCTION

Ecclesiastes 4,13-16 presents the interpreter with an enigmatic anecdote. The ambiguities in Qohelet's phrasing make it difficult even to determine what the anecdote specifically states, let alone understand its significance within the flow of Qohelet's discourse. It is ostensibly a proverb about an old foolish king, and a poor but wise youth who succeeds him. Qohelet observes that the youth is better than the old king (4,13), but beyond that the details are difficult to untangle for two reasons. First, the entire anecdote is related with anonymous characters. And second, Qohelet keeps using pronouns ("he" and "him") that seem to resist precise identification. Thus, although the NIV states that it is "the youth" who came from prison in 4,14, the Hebrew text merely says "he" came, without specifying whether "he" is the older king or the wiser youth. The NIV also states that all who lived under the sun followed "the youth, the king's successor", whereas it literally says that they followed "the second youth" (הילד השני) without specifying whether this is the wise youth mentioned previously, or an entirely different youth who has not been mentioned before. It sounds like Qohelet has specific people in mind, but commentators have been unable to identify them definitively, or even to confirm if this is the case.

To gain better purchase on the issue, I propose first to consider the consonantal Hebrew text, so as to establish a preliminary reading of what the anecdote actually says. This will include an analysis of the key pronouns used in the anecdote to establish how many players actually feature in it. Second, I will investigate the issue of the anecdote's anonymity, and how this affects any potential allusions to other persons and events. Third, I will compare the established reading of the text with potential historical referents to determine whether Qohelet is deliberately alluding to specific people and events, which might give us a tentative context for dating his composition. This will then be tested against the rest of Qohelet's discourse to see whether other elements in it confirm the potential referents in the anecdote. It will be argued that there are indeed specific and precise historical allusions in Qohelet's anecdote at 4,13-16, and that these can be confirmed by the rest of his discourse. These allusions then help us to see that Qohelet's purpose was not merely to dispense a generic kind of

wisdom, but rather to offer highly contextualized political critique of specific persons and events that had, in Qohelet's estimation, a disastrous effect on the people of Ptolemaic Judea in the third century BCE.

II. ESTABLISHING THE TEXT

The Masoretic Text of Ecclesiastes 4,13-16 is presented below with all vowels and cantillations removed:

טוב ילד מסכן וחכם ממלך זקן וכסיל אשר לא ידע להזהר עוד: כִּי־מבית הסורים יצא
למלך כי גם במלכותו נולד רש: ראיתי את־כל־החיים המהלכים תחת השמש עם הילד
השני אשר יעמד תחתיו: אֶךְ־קץ לכל־העם לכל אשר־היה לפניהם גם האחרונים לא
ישמחורבו כִּי־גם־זוה הבל ורעיון רוח:

There are three major issues to consider in establishing and understanding the text.

1. בית הסורים (4,14)

The first issue of note here is the phrase **בית הסורים** in 4,14. The ancient Greek translation renders this as οἶκος τῶν δεσμίων ("house of binding"). The Syriac and Vulgate follow this lead, as do most English versions in translating the phrase as "prison" (NRSV, NIV, CSB) or "dungeon" (JPS). Strictly speaking, however, this assumes a different Hebrew phrase, either **בית אסורים** or **בית האסורים**. There are three possible explanations for this. First, the Greek translator might have read a different Hebrew *Vorlage* that employed **בית אסורים**, rather than **בית הסורים** as the Masoretic Text preserves. Alternatively, the Greek translator might have made an inadvertent mistake, either misreading the text, or, if the text was read out in the process of translation, mishearing it. Or third, the Greek translator might have deliberately amended the text. Crenshaw argues that the Masoretic **הסורים** is due to the loss of the *aleph* after the definite article, which has been compensated for by the *qameṣ* as the initial vowel¹. However, the consonantal Hebrew text itself makes sense as it currently stands without the need to propose a defective text or make an amendment to it. The root סור can be used to indicate the removal of someone from a position of power (cf. Judg 9,29; 1 Kgs 15,13; 20,24). The plural ending is a plural of abstraction, which "aims at the various concrete manifestations of a quality or of a state"². Thus, the phrase **בית הסורים** means "the house of

¹ J.L. CRENSHAW, *Ecclesiastes. A Commentary* (London 1988) 113.

² P. JOÜON – T. MURAOKA, *A Grammar of Biblical Hebrew* (Roma 2006) §136g.

removal”, understood as the concrete circumstances pertaining to someone being turned away from a position of power and being sent into exile.

The question that we should then ask of the text is whether it can be understood as “house of removal”, which would obviate the need to amend the text to read “house of binding”. This will, therefore, be one of the factors we will seek to confirm or deny in our historical investigation.

2. נולד רש (4,14)

The final word in 4,14 is רש, which is universally interpreted as רש (“poor”) in line with the Masoretic pointing. The Greek translator of Ecclesiastes understood it this way, using the word πένης (“poor”) to translate it. This is actually the same word he uses to translate מסכן (“poor”) in the previous verse (4,13). Yet, the Hebrew text uses two completely different words in these respective verses. There are two possible factors influencing the translation of רש as “poor” in 4,14. First, the use of מסכן in 4,13 easily triggers the conceptual association of poverty that may then carry over to the next verse. Second, reading the phrase בית הסורים (“house of removal”) as בית אסורים (“house of binding”) might reinforce this conceptual association, leading a translator to link the concepts of imprisonment and poverty. One can see how 4,13 might thus colour the understanding of רש in 4,14.

However, this need not be the case. We must ask what is achieved by using two very different words to mark the same concept in successive verses. Other than variety, we are hard-pressed to find any warrant. And while variety might be the underlying reason, we must still weigh other possibilities, especially if we relax the assumption that רש and מסכן must refer to the same idea.

The word מסכן (4,13) is unambiguous, and so it ought to be understood as “poor” in the sense of lacking privileges or means³. The word רש in 4,14, though, has more than one interpretive possibility. First, it could be an Aramaism of the Hebrew word ראש, meaning “head” or “first”. We see a comparable pronunciation to this in the Masoretic Text of 2 Samuel 12,4 (ראש). Alternatively, without changing the consonantal Hebrew text at all, we can read a different vowel for the word, and take it as רש (“first”), that is, a defective form of ראש. Although Qohelet uses the *plene* form ראש elsewhere (Eccl 2,14; 3,11; 9,8), the variety of ways this word is spelled

³ Cf. CRENSHAW, *Ecclesiastes*, 113. C.-L. SEOW, *Ecclesiastes. A New Translation with Introduction* (New York 1997) 190-191, suggests that it be translated as “commoner”, which has many affinities with the position argued here.

in the Dead Sea Scrolls (רש, ראוש, רוש, ראש) attests to its elasticity ⁴. Both suggested alternatives (an Aramaism, or a defective spelling) amount to the same substantive reading, in which the word is translated “first”. This renders the phrase נולד רש not as “born poor”, but as “born first”.

This, in turn, makes much better sense of the attention Qohelet draws to the youth’s two circumstances in 4,14, namely that (1) he came from the “house of removal” to reign, and (2) he was born first in his kingdom. Qohelet mentions both these circumstances to create a sense of surprise, for no one would expect a firstborn prince to come from a “house of removal” (or even a “house of binding”) to reign. On the contrary, one would expect a firstborn prince simply to move into the position of rule by natural right of inheritance. Qohelet is thus underlining the abnormal circumstances in which the firstborn prince of his anecdote rises to the position of supremacy, and thereby highlights the youth’s wisdom. If, however, נולד רש is rendered “born poor”, then no abnormal circumstances are underlined. Instead, the second clause of 4,15 becomes completely redundant in light of the description of the youth as poor in 4,14. The rendering of נולד רש as “born first”, therefore, has more rhetorical force.

The possibility of this reading is further strengthened by the next verse (4,15), which mentions הילד השני (“the second youth”). Conceptually, the notion of one who is “second” gains more contextual relevance when the one who is “first” has already been introduced. Without this contextual preparation, the reader is surprised and indeed at a loss to know what to do with the sudden injection of “the second youth” (4,15) into the anecdote. Indeed, this is precisely the interpretive dilemma that has puzzled scholars in considering this verse. It is, therefore, worth considering this as part of the preliminary reading.

3. הילד השני (4,15)

Another key issue is just how many players are in Qohelet’s anecdote. It is clear that there are at least two: the “old but foolish king” and the “poor but wise youth” (4,13). What is ambiguous is whether “the second youth” of 4,15 should be equated with the “poor but wise youth” of 4,13, or be distinguished as an additional persona. Part of the ambiguity lies in determining the antecedent of the pronominal suffix on the word תחתיו (“in his place”) in the relative clause describing the second youth: does “the second youth” stand in the place of the “old but foolish king”? If so, this second youth should be equated with the “poor but wise youth”. Or

⁴ The defective form רש appears in 4Q328 (1.1) and 4Q561 (7.4).

does “the second youth” stand in the place of “the poor but wise youth?” In this case, “the second youth” is actually a third character introduced at this later point in the anecdote.

Gordis sees “the second youth” in apposition to the “poor but wise youth”⁵. In this case, the use of the definite article in הילד (“the youth”) would be anaphoric. But the difficulty with this is the specific attributive construction of the phrase הילד השני, and accounting for the modifier השני (“second”) within it. If the modifier appeared in a phrase המלך השני (“the second king”), or even האיש השני (“the second man”), then an anaphoric reference to the “poor but wise youth” would be a legitimate possibility. However, the definite adjective השני specifically modifies the definite noun הילד (“the youth”) in an attributive fashion. The suggestion that the construction simply indicates “the next youth” is attractive⁶, but this suggestion seeks to smooth over the precise designation, “second youth”, with a less precise designation, “next youth”, for lack of knowing what the more precise (and accurate) designation means. This is neither warranted, nor does it do justice to the text. The attributive construction הילד השני draws a clear distinction between the persona of “the second youth” and another first youth, who can only realistically be the one mentioned previously, namely the “poor but wise youth”. Both personas are described by the same noun ילד, but distinguished by their respective modifiers. Thus, the definite article in הילד (“the youth”) is not anaphoric, but rather serves to distinguish this second youth from that first youth⁷. Again, this adds further credence to our suggestion above, that רש in 4,14 be translated as “first” rather than as “poor”. Qohelet’s anecdote, therefore, features three distinct players: an “old but foolish king”, a “poor but wise youth”, and a “second youth”.

On this understanding, the closest antecedent for the pronominal suffix in תחתיו (4,15) is the first youth in the anecdote, rather than the older king. In other words, we have a situation in which the “old but foolish king” is succeeded by a “poor but wise youth”, who is then followed by “the second youth” who would stand in the place of the poor but wise youth. What precisely “stand in his place” means is also open for interpretation. It could refer to simple dynastic succession, or it could refer to a challenge of power. Both suggestions entail some kind of changing of

⁵ R. GORDIS, *Koheleth. The Man and His World* (Northvale, NJ 1995) 235; cf. A. SCHOORS, *Ecclesiastes* (Historical Commentary on the Old Testament; Leuven 2013) 361-362.

⁶ M.V. FOX, *A Time to Tear Down and a Time to Build Up. A Rereading of Ecclesiastes* (Eugene, OR 1999) 226; T. LONGMAN, *The Book of Ecclesiastes* (NICOT; Grand Rapids, MI 1998) 147; SEOW, *Ecclesiastes*, 185; cf. Crenshaw, *Ecclesiastes*, 113-114.

⁷ Cf. R.E. MURPHY, *Ecclesiastes* (Dallas, TX 1992) 42-43.

the guard, so conceptually there is not much to distinguish them⁸. To discern the best fit, we must investigate the possible historical background of the anecdote. In either case, the use of a *yiqtol* verb (עמד), rather than a *qatal* verb (עמד), suggests that the succession of “the second youth” was aspirational and not yet accomplished.

4. A Proposed Translation

Having considered these issues, we may propose the following translation of the consonantal Hebrew text of Ecclesiastes 4,13-16:

Better a poor but wise youth than an old but foolish king, who no longer knows how to take advice. For he came out of the house of removal to reign, even though within his kingdom he had been born first. I saw all the living who walk about under the sun following the second youth who would stand in his place. There was no end to all the people — to all who were before them. But even those who come later will not celebrate him. For this too is meaningless, and chasing the wind.

In this translation, the conjunctive expression כִּי גַם (4,14) is rendered as a concessive (“even though”). This picks up the sense of escalating emphasis, in which a circumstance (“within his kingdom he had been born first”) is presented in addition to a prior but contrasting observation (“he came out of the house of removal to reign”). This produces a sense of surprise that both these divergent circumstances could prevail upon the same third person subject (“he”).

Finally, it should be noted that this translation requires no amendment to the consonantal Hebrew text. The question now is whether there is any further warrant for insisting on maintaining בֵּית הַסּוּרִים as the original reading, translating נולד רשׁ as “born first” (rather than “born poor”), and seeing three players in the anecdote rather than just two. For this, we must consider the possible historical allusions in the anecdote, but first we must consider the issue of the anecdote’s anonymity.

III. QOHELET’S USE OF ANONYMITY

Qohelet veils his anecdote with ambiguity through his use of anonymity. He never mentions anyone by name, which makes identifying his own historical context difficult. Qohelet’s entire rhetorical strategy leans

⁸ Cf. SCHOORS, *Ecclesiastes*, 361-362.

heavily on anonymity. The only overtly named person in the entire book is David, whose name appears in the title (Eccl 1,1), rather than in the discourse proper. And though “Qohelet” is often treated as the author’s name, this is little more than a modern convention, as most interpreters recognise this as more a label than a name — a kind of *nom de plume* shrouded in yet more anonymity.

According to Barbour, the anonymity in 4,13-16 permits us to discern a pattern within it, in addition to any immediate historical referents from Qohelet’s day: “Qohelet recognizes in current events a recurring pattern from his own literary tradition, and as he tells his present-day tale he sets out the events on that ancient template”⁹. Thus, Barbour reads a rags-to-riches narrative arc that resembles numerous biblical stories¹⁰. For example, the old but foolish king resembles Solomon, and the poor but wise youth resembles Jeroboam I, who became the first king of the northern kingdom after Israel’s fracture under Rehoboam (cf. 1 Kgs 11,40; 12,20)¹¹. Barbour follows the translation of “prison” rather than “house of removal” in 4,14, but she still notes that Jeroboam came from removal/exile in Egypt to rule. The reading “house of removal” rather than “house of binding” aligns her suggestion even more closely with the unamended consonantal text proposed here. The Targum of Qohelet offers this as the express meaning of 4,15¹². The difficulty with Barbour’s identification at this point lies in trying to fit Rehoboam, son of Solomon, into the anecdote, since he does not match either the first or second youth¹³. According to Barbour, this lack of precision does not matter, because she sees the anonymity of the anecdote as prompting a vague association with the story of Solomon and Jeroboam. She notes that the anecdote also imprecisely alludes to the rise of a young David at the expense of an old and mad King Saul, who scorns the advice of Jonathan, his firstborn (1 Samuel 19–20). We also see shadows of an older David who foolishly fails to follow advice, which leads to the coup of Absalom, his son (2 Sam 14,25 – 19,8), as well as a senile David who is succeeded by his oldest surviving son, Adonijah, who is in turn outdone by Solomon (1 Kgs 1,1 – 2,25).

⁹ J. BARBOUR, *The Story of Israel in the Book of Qohelet*. Ecclesiastes as Cultural Memory (Oxford 2012) 86.

¹⁰ BARBOUR, *The Story of Israel in the Book of Qohelet*, 86–92.

¹¹ BARBOUR, *The Story of Israel in the Book of Qohelet*, 88. Cf. W.P. BROWN, *Ecclesiastes* (Interpretation; Louisville, KY 2000) 53–54.

¹² Cf. SCHOORS, *Ecclesiastes*, 360.

¹³ The Targum of Qohelet tries creatively to get around this by having Qohelet, whom it understands to be Solomon, refer to Rehoboam as second in the kingdom to himself. This fails to work closely with the nature of the attributive construction in הילד השני.

Barbour rightly acknowledges that these stories were familiar enough to Qohelet's audience to evoke the "social memory" of their "standard outline" ¹⁴. The imprecision of the biblical allusions might be enough to discourage us from seeking a more precise fit for its referents, for the anecdote might simply be a one-size-fits-all story. But despite its imprecision, Qohelet still chose to give the anecdote a particular shape. This might be the result of necessary genericization, but it might also be the result of more precise and intentional historical allusions. The anonymity of the anecdote is actually what permits us to seek potentially precise referents in Qohelet's day, for it would allow Qohelet's audience to compare the familiar biblical stories with the events of their own day, and thus affirm Qohelet's precept that there is nothing new under the sun (see Eccl 1,9; 3,15). Indeed, Barbour recognizes such a purpose. It is worthwhile, therefore, to search for potential historical referents that might shed further light on the anecdote of 4,13-16.

IV. HISTORICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Krüger suggested that the transition of power from Ptolemy IV Philopator to Ptolemy V Epiphanes in 204 BCE might be the historical incident that stands behinds 4,13 ¹⁵. Ptolemy IV is known to have been prolifically negligent in government and assiduously devoted to wealth and luxury. Indeed, he was responsible for the near collapse of the Ptolemaic Kingdom. He would be a leading candidate for the "old but foolish king". This would make his six-year-old son, Ptolemy V, who came to the throne at the age of six, the poor but wise youth who succeeded him.

As promising as Krüger's suggestion is, there are several difficulties with it. First, his argument works with an amended Hebrew text that reads **בית אסורים** ("house of binding") rather than **בית הסורים** ("house of removal"). Even so, Krüger implies that the "house of binding" from which Ptolemy V came is a reference to him being subject to his two regents, Sosibius and Agathocles. Ptolemy V's regency was filled with strife, and neither Sosibius nor Agathocles survived to see Ptolemy V's majority. But to call his regency a "house of binding" is not a neat fit. Though he was indeed subject to others' authority, the boy was still worshipped as the Egyptian head of state, and he was not confined in any way. Both "house of binding" and "house of removal" are poor metaphors for his situation. Krüger's suggestion also

¹⁴ BARBOUR, *The Story of Israel in the Book of Qohelet*, 92. She builds on the work of J. FENTRESS and C. WICKHAM in *Social Memory* (Oxford 1992) 68.

¹⁵ T. KRÜGER, *Qoheleth* (Hermeneia; Minneapolis, MN 2004) 103.

separates vv. 13-14, which he sees as a potential reference to history, from vv. 15-16, which he sees as less historical and more proverbially generic. This inserts an artificial divide into the anecdote, and highlights how vv. 15-16 do not fit the situation of Ptolemy IV or his successors. For example, in addition to the difficulty mentioned above, it is plainly impossible to think of Ptolemy V as a “poor” (מסכן) youth given the astonishing wealth that his father, Ptolemy IV, had amassed. There are too many aspects of this proposal that simply do not fit Qohelet’s anecdote.

A clear identification of the respective figures emerges when we turn to the Seleucid Kingdom. The “old but foolish king” may be identified with Antiochus II (261-246 BCE), the “poor but wise youth” with his eldest son, Seleucus II, and “the second youth” with Antiochus’ second son, Antiochus Hierax.

After the stalemate of the Second Syrian War (260-253 BCE), Antiochus agreed to marry Berenice, the daughter of his erstwhile foe, Ptolemy II, in order to make peace (Dan 11,6). For this arrangement to work, Ptolemy insisted that Antiochus divorce his first wife, Laodice, to ensure that a son of Berenice would be the heir to the Seleucid throne, rather than a son of Laodice. Antiochus, pressed by concerns of the crumbling flanks of his kingdom, complied and so divorced Laodice, confining her and her two sons to exile in the province of Asia. Laodice and her supporters did not take too kindly to this peremptory removal from court. Though Seleucus was “born first”, he and his younger brother, Antiochus Hierax, were estranged from their father and officially removed from the line of succession. At the time (252 BCE), both sons were youths — Seleucus was approximately twelve years of age, and Antiochus Hierax slightly younger than that. A few years later, this removal was permanently cemented when Antiochus II fathered a son by Berenice, and that child was acclaimed as the new heir to the Seleucid throne. In this way, “house of removal” accurately describes the banishment of the erstwhile crown prince, Seleucus, along with his younger brother, Antiochus Hierax, and their mother, Laodice, to Asia Minor ¹⁶.

Antiochus II’s folly was seen in his decision to return to his first wife, Laodice, in 246 BCE. Not only did this repudiate his treaty with Ptolemy II and add uncertainty to the Seleucid succession, but it also resulted in Antiochus’ premature death. He seems to have held genuine affection for Laodice, which is probably what prompted his return to her, despite

¹⁶ E.R. BEVAN, *The House of Seleucus*, Vol. 1 (Cambridge [1902] 2015) 178-180; *The House of Ptolemy* (London 1927; Abingdon 2014) 70-71; G. HÖLBL, *A History of the Ptolemaic Empire* (Abingdon 2001) 44-45; J. GRAINGER, *The Rise of the Seleukid Empire, 323-223 BC* (Barnsley 2014) 180-185.

the political ramifications. However, Laodice had not forgiven him for spurning her through political expediency in the first place. She now got her revenge by lethally poisoning Antiochus in 246 BCE. Antiochus was over forty years old when he died, though his precise age is not known¹⁷. The use of the adjective זקן (“old”) to describe him in Ecclesiastes 4,13 does not necessitate that he was a geriatric. The term typically denotes a man with legal status and power in society (cf. the common translation “elder”) and is used by Qohelet to contrast him with his two young sons. In other words, Qohelet’s terminology simply underscores that Antiochus II is the elder figure in the anecdote, while his two sons were indeed “youths”.

After Antiochus’ death, Laodice arranged for the murder of Berenice and her infant son, thus removing the baby from the Seleucid succession. This paved the way for her own eldest son, the now eighteen-year old Seleucus, to be declared the new king¹⁸. This makes sense of Qohelet’s emphatic concessive clause in 4,14: Seleucus II (246-225 BCE) “came out of the house of removal to reign, even though within his kingdom he had been born first”.

Antiochus Hierax, being the second son of Antiochus II, then matches Qohelet’s description of “the second youth” (4,15). Soon after Seleucus became king, a fierce rivalry broke out between the two brothers. Antiochus Hierax, though still an adolescent at this stage, took the initiative to ensure control over Asia Minor, which the Seleucid crown still held only weakly. Although Seleucus might initially have approved of this as a measure for consolidating Seleucid rule in the region, it soon became clear that Antiochus Hierax had ambitions beyond being a mere subordinate to his older brother. Antiochus Hierax sought the support of a wide variety of people. These included: his uncle, Alexander, who was governor of Lydia; Mithridates of Pontus; and the Galatians — Celtic mercenaries who had arrived in the region from Gaul a generation earlier and wreaked havoc throughout Greece, Thrace, and Asia Minor. Antiochus Hierax, therefore, built up a considerable power base, consisting of people whose origins lay at the edge of Qohelet’s known world. The rivalry between the two brothers reached a climactic moment in 237 BCE, when they met in battle at Ancyra. Antiochus Hierax won this battle, and Seleucus retreated into Syria. Antiochus Hierax thus took the title “king” over the portions of Asia Minor he now controlled. Once again, we see how this resonates with Qohelet’s

¹⁷ GRAINGER, *The Rise of the Seleukid Empire*, 186.

¹⁸ BEVAN, *The House of Seleucus*, 181-184; GRAINGER, *The Rise of the Seleukid Empire*, 188-189.

anecdote, when he describes, albeit with some hyperbole, “all the living who walk about under the sun following the second youth [i.e., Antiochus Hierax] who would stand in his [i.e., Seleucus II’s] place” (4,15). Furthermore, 4,16 accurately describes his downfall, for Antiochus Hierax was then defeated by other local powers, such as Attalus of Pergamum. After a failed attempt to gain control of Syria, he became a fugitive, and was eventually captured in c. 227 BCE and executed by the Gauls in Thrace ¹⁹. The ambiguity of 4,16 prevents us from knowing whether Qohelet knew of Antiochus Hierax’s death, but he certainly seems to have known of his political demise.

In 1959, K.D. Schunck proposed a very similar identification to the one argued for here. He equated the “old but foolish king” with Antiochus II, and the first youth with his son, Seleucus II. However, he understood “the second youth” as Antiochus III ²⁰. This last identification is understandable when we consider Antiochus III’s undulating career and Qohelet’s comments in 4,15-16, but it has two major drawbacks. First, Seleucus II was initially succeeded by his son, Seleucus III, who ruled for three years until his assassination in 222 BCE. Only then did Antiochus III succeed to the Seleucid throne. If, then, Antiochus III is Qohelet’s “second youth”, we must posit a gap in Qohelet’s anecdote, in which he passes over Seleucus III completely. This, however, strains the meaning of 4,15, in which Qohelet says that the second son “would stand in his [i.e., Seleucus II’s] place”. Second, the varying fortunes of Antiochus III extended throughout his long reign (222-187 BCE), with his pitiful demise coming only after his defeat by the Romans at Magnesia in 190 BCE and the humiliating Treaty of Apamea that they subsequently foisted on him in 188 BCE. This extends the timeline of Qohelet’s anecdote out to over six decades. This is not impossible, but it does stretch the anecdote, which itself is then undermined by the first drawback. The anecdote is much more exact and concise, as befits Qohelet’s proverbial presentation, when we identify “the second youth” with Antiochus II’s second son, Antiochus Hierax.

The precision with which Qohelet’s anecdote maps onto the machinations of Seleucid dynastic politics is difficult to ignore. Indeed, it is highly unlikely that the precision is accidental. On the contrary, it seems Qohelet had it squarely in mind, and the contours of the controversies help us disambiguate and demystify the anecdote. All this means that Qohelet

¹⁹ BEVAN, *The House of Seleucus*, 191-203; GRAINGER, *The Rise of the Seleukid Empire*, 194-205.

²⁰ K.D. SCHUNCK, “Drei Seleukiden im Buche Kohelet?” VT 9 (1959) 192-201.

most likely wrote his discourse shortly after the events described, namely in the mid-220s BCE when Jerusalem and Judea were under Ptolemaic rule.

V. TESTING THE HYPOTHESIS

We must now test this preliminary conclusion by asking what purpose this anecdote served in Qohelet's discourse, and whether there are any other historical clues in his discourse that might shed light on his purpose.

First, the ongoing struggles between the Seleucids and the Ptolemies for control of Coele Syria are well known. By the proposed time of Qohelet's writing in the mid-220s BCE, the two kingdoms had already waged three "Syrian Wars", and they would go on to fight another three in subsequent decades. This perpetual contest gives Qohelet's statement in 1,6 a political texture:

הולך אל-דרום וסובב אל-צפון סובב סבב הולך הרוח ועל-סביבתיו שב הרוח

Going to the south and around to the north; round and round goes the wind, and back on its rounds the wind returns.

As in Daniel 11, the "south" can be understood as a reference to the Ptolemaic Kingdom, and the "north" a reference to the Seleucids. This injects political significance into Qohelet's discourse. His discussion of the circular nature of existence is not merely a naturalistic observation from which he offers generic wisdom, but rather a highly contextualized observation from which he offers political critique. The constant tug-of-war between the Ptolemies and Seleucids had a profound influence over Judean politics, which is why the allusion (1,6) appears in the opening movement of his discourse. A similar reference to the south and the north appears towards the end of Qohelet's discourse (11,3b):

ואם-יפול עץ בדרום ואם בצפון מקום שיפול העץ שם יהוא

And whether a tree falls to the south or to the north, the place where the tree falls, there it will be.

This statement pithily captures the uncertainty of political developments in the Hellenistic world of the late third century BCE. Qohelet implies that no one in Judea could predict or affect the outcome of the power struggles between the Ptolemies (the south) and the Seleucids (the north). That lay entirely in the unseen and unfathomable hand of providence (11,5-6; cf. 3,1-15). A reference to the dynastic struggles of the Seleucids in

4,13-16 is, therefore, not random and isolated, but part of the larger framework of Qohelet's thinking, which sees the struggles between the Ptolemies and Seleucids as particularly relevant for his purposes.

The significance of this framework becomes apparent when the flow of Qohelet's discourse is compared with the events in Judea of the 220s BCE. These events are mainly known to us from Josephus, who drew upon the so-called Tobiad Romance in putting together his account in the *Antiquities*²¹. Though the reliability of the Tobiad Romance is sometimes questioned, mainly on the basis of the chronological problems that riddle Josephus' account, the broad outline can be untangled and corroborated with the help of other sources. There are five anchor points that allow us to do this. The first is the reference to Ptolemy III Euergetes (246-222 BCE) as the king whom the High Priest Onias II offended (*Ant.* 12.158-159). The second is that Onias II's nephew, Joseph Tobias, was the chief tax farmer of Coele Syria while Judea was undisputedly still in Ptolemaic hands (*Ant.* 12.175-179), that is, before 202 BCE. The third is that Joseph Tobias claimed he was too old to attend the celebrations in Egypt for the birthday of Ptolemy IV in 209 BCE (*Ant.* 12.196), which means he must have died shortly afterwards in the period 209-202 BCE. The fourth is the statement that Joseph Tobias held the Ptolemaic tax farming rights for twenty-two years until his death (*Ant.* 12.224). Given that Joseph Tobias died shortly before the Fifth Syrian War broke out in 202 BCE (*Ant.* 12.228-229), his initial appointment must be placed in the early 220s BCE, during the reign of Ptolemy III Euergetes, at the latest. And the fifth is the suicide of Joseph Tobias' youngest son, Hyrcanus, during the Fifth Syrian War (202-198 BCE) when Antiochus III won possession of Coele Syria (*Ant.* 12.236). Hyrcanus had been active for seven years as a tax farmer in Transjordan, matching precisely with his appointment shortly after the birthday celebrations for Ptolemy IV in 209 BCE (*Ant.* 12.221-222). These five anchor points give us chronological bed-rock for the events of the late third century BCE. They ensure that Joseph Tobias can be identified as the son of Tobias (*Ant.* 12.160), who is

²¹ Contrary to Seow's claim that we know very little of the political history of the period (*Ecclesiastes*, 190), we actually have a wealth of information that can be used to weigh and corroborate Josephus' account. See discussion of Onias II and the Tobiads in J.C. VANDERKAM, *From Joshua to Caiaphas. High Priests after the Exile* (Minneapolis, MN 2004) 168-181; L.L. GRABBE, *A History of the Jews and Judaism in the Second Temple Period*, Vol. 2. The Coming of the Greeks: The Early Hellenistic Period (335-175 BCE) (Library of Second Temple Studies 68; London 2008) 293-298. Further discussion will be provided in my forthcoming volumes: G. ATHAS, *Ecclesiastes and Song of Songs* (Story of God Bible Commentary; Grand Rapids, MI, forthcoming); *Bridging the Testaments* (Grand Rapids, MI, forthcoming).

mentioned in the Zenon Papyri as the cleruch of Ammanitis in 259/8 BCE. Joseph Tobias' mother was the sister of the Jewish High Priest Onias II (*Ant* 12.160), who is also of importance to Qohelet's discourse. Joseph Tobias was, therefore, the nephew of Onias II.

As High Priest and "Custodian" (Greek: *prostatēs*) of the Jewish nation, Onias II was required to pay the Ptolemaic crown an annual fee for his position. According to Josephus, this was twenty talents of silver (*Ant*. 12.158). However, some time before c. 227 BCE, Onias refused to pay the fee, which effectively amounted to putting the Jewish nation in rebellion against Ptolemaic rule. In c. 227 BCE, Ptolemy III sent an ambassador to Jerusalem to collect the payment, with the threat of military reprisal, land confiscation, and more stringent occupation in the event of Onias' failure to pay (*Ant*. 12.159). Panic gripped Jerusalem until Onias' nephew, Joseph Tobias, gained public approval from a gathering in the temple to represent the people and proceeded to defuse the situation (*Ant*. 12.160-165). After winning over the Ptolemaic ambassador, Joseph Tobias headed to Egypt and placated Ptolemy III, thus averting disaster for Jerusalem (*Ant*. 12.165-174). However, while Joseph Tobias was in Egypt, the auction for the tax farming rights to Coele Syria took place. When he opportunistically promised to double the tax revenues of Coele Syria, Ptolemy III awarded him the tax farming rights (*Ant*. 12.175-179). Accordingly, Joseph Tobias returned to Judea with military backing, and proceeded to extort even higher taxes from a population that was already oppressed by high taxation and which had suffered a loss of wealth through the process of rapid monetization which had occurred in the Ptolemaic realm during the third century BCE (*Ant*. 12.180-185). Thus, although the Jewish people had been spared a military onslaught, they suddenly found themselves tyrannized by one of their own, Joseph Tobias. Many began to live in abject misery.

Qohelet's discourse makes frequent allusions to the course of these events, which helps us appreciate the significance of the anecdote in 4,13-16. The anecdote leads immediately to a discussion about avoiding rash oaths and the consequences of failing to pay what had been promised (4,17 – 5,6 [5,1-7 Eng]). Since the Ptolemies were worshipped in Egypt as deities, it was common for folk to make sacrifices to them as proof of their loyalty. This was, however, highly objectionable to the monotheistic Jews of this era. The Ptolemies knew that "the people of Jerusalem were most faithful in the observation of oaths and covenants" (*Ant*. 12.8), and so they accepted such oaths in the name of the Jewish God as security instead. Thus, rather than offering sacrifice to Ptolemy III as a means of guaranteeing the payment for his position, Onias II took an oath in the name of YHWH at the temple in Jerusalem — the highest invocation

possible, and certainly the most suitable for the Jewish high priest. And yet, Onias reneged on this oath and refused to pay what he owed to Ptolemy III. Qohelet castigates those like Onias II, who vow to God to make a payment, and then fail to pay it when “the messenger” arrives to collect it (Eccl 5,3-5 [5,4-6 Eng]). He views such behavior as foolish and provoking the anger of God. While we might see Qohelet’s statements as referring generically to any rash or unfulfilled oath of payment to the temple, this seems merely to be the legal precedent he uses to critique Onias’ poor judgment. Josephus’ account follows the political repercussions of Onias’ actions, but Qohelet dwells also on its religious significance. If the high priest himself could sin foolishly by failing to pay what he had pledged before God to pay, then God’s anger against him and the entire nation, of which he was Custodian, was justified.

Qohelet then urges his readers not to be surprised when they see oppression of the poor and perversion of justice in the province (5,7-8 [5,8-9 Eng]). This is not a sudden change of topic, but rather matches the outcome of Onias’ obstinacy and of the greedy opportunism of Joseph Tobias. It shows the social dimension of Onias’ failure to pay for his position, as it was not just he who suffered the consequences of his folly but also the entire province, first with the threat of military action, and second with the extortionate tax regime that Joseph Tobias subsequently imposed on the province. This also helps us to understand the otherwise enigmatic statement in 5,8 [5,9 Eng]:

וַיִּתְּרוֹן אֶרֶץ בְּכָל הָיָא מֶלֶךְ לְשָׂדֶה נֶעֱבַד

Though the increase of a land should be for all, a king is served by a country ²².

In other words, Qohelet shows how corruption is institutionalized through the many layers of Ptolemaic officials (5,7 [5,8 Eng]), which ensures that the wealth that should ordinarily be enjoyed by the people who produce it is, instead, sent to the king for his enjoyment via a system of royal lackeys. The commoner is thus robbed of his produce and means of survival, and therefore has no “profit” (וַיִּתְּרוֹן) for all his toil (cf. 3,9). All that the producers of goods can do is to look at their goods before they are taken from them by the king’s officials (cf. 5,10 [5,11 Eng]).

This leads Qohelet to a declaration that a lover of money and wealth will never be satisfied with them (5,9 [5,10 Eng]). Once again, this is not a random change of topic, but a thoughtful reflection on the personal motivations of all the main players involved in the political events of

²² The translation of the initial *waw* conjunction as a concessive (“though”) is derived from the contrast between what *should* occur “for all” and what *does* occur for “a king”.

c. 227 BCE. According to Josephus, Onias “was of small mind and weak when it came to money” (*Ant.* 12.158). Joseph Tobias’ love of lucre was evident in his opportunistic bid for the tax farming rights and the enormous fortune he amassed for himself through the extortion of the population (cf. *Ant.* 12.184). And Ptolemy III’s avarice was demonstrated when he was so clearly wooed by Joseph Tobias’ pledge to double his revenues (*Ant.* 12.177-178). This then leads Qohelet to a discussion of the deprivation and poverty experienced by the masses. They “toil for the wind” (5,15 [5,16 Eng]). This is not a wistful statement about failing to find lasting meaning in wealth, but an allusion both to the futility of people’s work in the face of extortionate taxation and the “south wind” of the Ptolemies (cf. 1,6), who amassed the wealth that had been stripped from Judea²³.

Qohelet’s discourse continues to bemoan the tragic lot of the commoners who endured abject misery under the leadership of fools like Onias, the wicked like Joseph Tobias, and the greedy like Ptolemy III. He then reaches a point in his discourse where he dispenses wisdom about dealing with a king (8,2-8):

פִּי־מֶלֶךְ שְׁמוֹר וְעַל דְּבַרְתָּ שְׁבוּעַת אֱלֹהִים אֶל־תִּבְהַל מִפְּנֵי תֶלֶךְ אֶל־תַּעֲמֹד בְּדַבַּר רֶעַ כִּי כֹל־אֲשֶׁר יִחְפֹּץ יַעֲשֶׂה בְּאִשֶּׁר דְּבַר־מֶלֶךְ שְׁלֹטֹן וּמִי יֹאמְרֵלּוּ מִה־תַּעֲשֶׂה שׁוֹמֵר מִצְוָה לֹא יִדַּע דְּבַר רֶעַ וְעַתָּה וּמִשְׁפָּט יָדַע לֵב חָכָם כִּי לִכְל־חֶפֶץ יֵשׁ עֵת וּמִשְׁפָּט כִּי־רַעַת הָאָדָם רַבָּה עָלָיו כִּי־אֵינָנוּ יֹדַע מִה־שִׁיחִיָּה כִּי כֹאֲשֶׁר יִהְיֶה מִי יִגִּיד לוֹ אֵין אָדָם שְׁלִיט בְּרוּחַ לִכְלוֹא אֶת־הָרוּחַ וְאֵין שְׁלֹטֹן בְּיוֹם הַמוֹת וְאֵין מִשְׁלַחַת בְּמַלְחָמָה וְלֹא־יִמְלֹט רֹשַׁע אֶת־בְּעָלָיו

Obey the king's command. Because of the oath to God, do not hurry away from him. You should go. Do not stay for a bad cause, for he will do whatever he wants, because the word of the king is supreme. Who will say to him, "What are you doing?" He who obeys a command will not experience anything bad. The mind of a wise man knows timing and decision. For there is a time and decision for every purpose, but the stupidity of humans weighs heavily on them. For no one knows what will happen. For who can

²³ Qohelet’s stated opposition to the likes of Joseph Tobias and his family means that we cannot accept the theory that Qohelet was closely connected to the Tobiads. This theory is presented in J.J. KWON – M. BRÜTSCH, “Gemeinsame intellektuelle Hintergründe in Kohelet und in der Familientradition der Tobiaden”, *ZAW* 130 (2018) 235-251. Kwon and Brütisch rightly point out some of the epistemological framework shared by Qohelet and the Tobiads, but this merely attests to their shared context, rather than a deeper alliance. Qohelet was clearly familiar with the Tobiads, as he was with Onias II, but he was highly critical of them. And his critique of conventional Jewish wisdom was not conducted in pursuit of Greek culture, but rather in a spirit of despair that believed traditional Jewish conventions were being eroded by the harsh winds of Ptolemaic and Seleucid politics, and the loose soil of local Jewish leadership. Qohelet’s pessimism is thus not derived from a pro-Hellenistic stance, but rather from not knowing where to turn to rescue Jewish identity and life from damaging leaders and the inadequacy of previous traditions. The argument of Kwon and Brütisch lends further contextual support to dating Qohelet to the Ptolemaic-Seleucid period, though slightly earlier than their proposal in the early second century BCE.

predict what is to happen? No person has the power over the wind to control the wind. And there is certainly no authority on the day of death, or discharge from battle. And wickedness will not save those who practice it.

Certain aspects of this passage seem obscure and even nonsensical until we understand the historical context behind it. Though couched as generic advice and shrouded in anonymity, a reader familiar with the events of the 220s BCE cannot fail to see that Qohelet once again has Onias II in his sights. We see allusions to Onias' failure to make good on his vow to pay what Ptolemy III demanded from him for his position; his failure to go to Ptolemy to deal with the situation, which prompted Joseph Tobias to interpose himself instead; the fear associated with the unpredictable response of the king; and the threat of military reprisal.

This particular passage also sheds light on the anecdote back in 4,13-16. Qohelet clearly believed that Onias had foolishly misjudged the political climate by failing to pay his fee to Ptolemy III, and that this had terrible consequences. He puts this down to both the power wielded by the king and the inability of anyone to predict the future. This latter notion is paralleled by the claim that "no person has the power over the wind to control the wind" (8,8). Once again, we are reminded of the movement of the wind from the south to the north and back to the south again (1,6). For Qohelet, the wind is not merely a symbol of impossible attainment, but also a political symbol and barometer. Furthermore, Qohelet's precise phrasing in 8,8 mentions the wind twice (אין אדם שליט ברוח לכלוא את-הרוח) — a seeming redundancy unless he is referring to two political entities, namely the Seleucids in the north and the Ptolemies in the south. The "wind" is a metaphor of Hellenistic political power, which, according to Qohelet, Onias could never actually control. This receives further support by the later reference to the inability of anyone to predict whether a tree will fall "to the south" or "to the north" (11,3). When these are read in light of the anecdote in 4,13-16, it seems that Onias had sought to change his loyalties from the Ptolemies to the Seleucids. The ascendancy of Seleucus II to the throne in 246 BCE caused a political shift in the region. No longer were the Ptolemies in the ascendancy, for the murder of Berenice and her child ensured that a Ptolemaic descendant would not inherit the Seleucid throne. The political wind had turned to the north. This seems to have induced Onias to "hurry away from" Ptolemy III (8,3) towards the Seleucids. Thus, while Josephus states that Onias' motivation for reneging on his loyalty payment was greed (*Ant.* 12.158), Qohelet implies that it was also a political decision prompted by the dynastic events in the Seleucid kingdom. This was a great gamble by Onias, and one that might have initially paid dividends, for it seems that Ptolemy III did not immediately react to his

default in payment. Indeed, there was probably a delay of some years before Ptolemy acted in c. 227 BCE, which allowed Onias to remain trenchant in his recalcitrance. This delay seems implied by 8,11:

אשר אי־נעשה פתגם מעשה הרעה מהרה על־כן מלא לב בניהאדם בהם לעשות רע

Because sentence is not carried out quickly against an evil action, the heart of humans within them is filled with doing evil.

Onias' recalcitrance is characterized here as "evil", though it could also be rendered as "acting badly". There is probably also an allusion to Joseph Tobias' perfidy here, since Ptolemy III's failure to deal promptly with Onias enabled Joseph Tobias to take advantage of the situation. Onias' gamble ultimately did not pay off, for the Seleucids did not win control of Coele Syria at this time. Instead, the Ptolemies retained Coele Syria for another 27 years, with Joseph Tobias taxing the population harshly for 22 of those years, and becoming the main power broker in Judea. Onias failed to predict that that tree would fall "to the south" (cf. 11,3). He died a few years later (c. 219 BCE) politically isolated and hugely unpopular.

VI. CONCLUSION

Qohelet's anecdote in 4,13-16 has the dynastic struggles of Antiochus II and his two sons, Seleucus II and Antiochus Hierax, in mind. These struggles prompted the High Priest Onias II to remove his loyalty from Ptolemy III and seek an alignment with the Seleucids — a political gamble that, according to Qohelet, had disastrous consequences for the people of Judea, for it allowed the opportunistic and wicked Joseph Tobias to insert himself into the situation. This resulted in the oppression of the common people through extortionate taxation.

When Qohelet's discourse is read against these events of the third century BCE, we see that his purpose was to do more than just dispense generic wisdom. He was responding to what he saw as the folly, wickedness, greed, and injustice of those who exercised leadership over the Jewish nation, which tempted God to act in anger, and resulted in the institutionalized oppression of the common people.

In this way, Qohelet was fulfilling an oft-understated role of the sage, namely, to appraise political circumstances and give advice to political leaders. We note, for example, that his advice on how to handle the king in 8,2-8 was not generic advice for every person. The commoner would never have expected to have any direct dealings with the king, especially a Ptolemaic king ensconced in a palace in Alexandria. But the political

leaders and the elite certainly would do so, as indeed the exploits of Joseph Tobias demonstrated. Qohelet bemoaned the state of the Jewish nation in the late third century BCE. This explains the dark and pessimistic tenor of his entire discourse, which is punctuated by his frequent insistence that all is meaningless (הבל). He sees the encouragement to eat, drink, and find satisfaction in work as the best that anyone in Ptolemaic Judea can expect, but even in this there is no guarantee, since the lot for most people is actually to eat in darkness with much frustration, sickness, and resentment (5,16 [5,17 Eng]). So pessimistic was Qohelet at the plight of Judea in his day that he esteemed the stillborn baby, who never actually experiences life, as having the best experience (6,3-5). Qohelet's political appraisals inform his wisdom.

In closing, we return to the issue of the anonymity Qohelet employs throughout his discourse. By making all the characters within his discourse anonymous, including himself, Qohelet has achieved three goals.

First, he has depersonalized his discourse. He makes it conform to the norms of wisdom literature by presenting everyone and everything in it in a proverbial style. In other words, he offers his highly contextualized observations in a standard wisdom template. Qohelet was, after all, a sage who handled proverbs (12,9).

Second, the anonymity enacts in literary fashion the sense that the Jewish nation was losing its identity. The foolish, ambitious, and avaricious actions of its leaders had plunged the nation into a crisis, and Qohelet despaired of a meaningful recovery, especially in the light of seeming divine inaction. The distinction of the Jewish nation over and against its Gentile neighbours was being eroded, such that discrete Jewish identity was being lost, and justice was being overturned. This is something Qohelet cannot make sense of, particularly given the overarching sovereignty of the Jewish God. It drives him to declare all things to be utterly meaningless (הבל הבלים).

Thirdly, in related fashion, but in a more active and significant way, Qohelet has effectively expunged the names of the foolish and the wicked from the public record, engaging in a kind of *damnatio memoriae* (cf. 1,11). In his estimation, the calamitous consequences of their leadership left the common people to die in anonymous weakness, poverty, and frustration. Both the powerful and the weak, therefore, are nameless throughout his discourse, reinforcing the meaninglessness of their actions and experiences. He therefore perceived a bleak future for the Jewish nation in the mid 220s BCE. The plaintive poem of waning life in the city, with which he ends his discourse (12,1-7), should thus be understood not just as a reflection on old age and the specter of death, but also of what he saw as

the encroaching death of Jerusalem, Judea, and the Jewish nation under the leadership of the foolish and the wicked. Qohelet despaired of making any sense of this, especially when he could not see God doing anything new to stop the nation's meaningless descent into death (cf. 1,9-11; 3,9-11).

Moore Theological College
1 King St.
Newtown 2042, Australia
george.athas@moore.edu.au

George ATHAS

SUMMARY

The enigmatic anecdote of the old and foolish king in Ecclesiastes 4,13-16 is a key text for identifying the specific context of Qohelet. This article argues that the anecdote is not merely proverbial and abstract, but reflects actual political events in the second half of the third century BCE. The old and foolish king, and the two youths who follow him, may be identified with specific figures from the Seleucid Kingdom. This identification is upheld by further clues in the rest of Qohelet's discourse and provides us with a specific dating of Ecclesiastes in the 220s BCE. The context of the struggles between the Ptolemies and Seleucids demonstrates that the book of Ecclesiastes provides not just abstract philosophical wisdom but also pointed political commentary on developments in Judea during this time.

TRAVEL AND WISDOM:
AN INTERPRETATION OF SIRACH 31[34],9-12; 39,4; 51,13
IN THE JEWISH AND HELLENISTIC CONTEXTS*

The modern idea of travel involves a range of different aspects, one of which is the education which results for the individual. It is well expressed by the quotation from Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, “Die beste Bildung findet ein gescheiter Mensch auf Reisen” [an intelligent man finds the best education on his journeys] ¹. This quotation does not mean that it is impossible to be educated in one’s own country but that a stay in a foreign land allows the individual to confront the unknown, to gain experience and to enlarge their personal horizon. *Grosso modo*, this idea was already an ancient one. We find it in texts and witnesses which go back to Greek antiquity. Where the Bible is concerned, the model of a traveller *par excellence* is the patriarch Abraham who came from Ur of the Chaldees and arrived in Canaan (Gen 11,31). Nevertheless, no biblical text states that Abraham moved from home in order to be educated or to enlarge the field of his experiences. On the contrary, according to the text of Genesis (12,1), he was only obeying the call of God. To find the idea of a journey as an occasion to be educated and to learn in the biblical context, we have to consult a deuterocanonical text, the book of Sirach, a relatively recent text which dates from the second century B.C.E. ².

In this article, I would like to examine three passages from the book of Sirach which mention travelling: Sir 31[34],9-11; 39,4; 51,13. The idea which interests me in particular concerns the value which is attributed to the kind of journey that would permit the sage to develop his

* A first draft of this article was presented in French at the University of Strasbourg in the course of the Journée d’étude “La Sagesse au carrefour des nations” (8th June 2018) organized by Prof. Françoise Vinel and by me. An English version was presented at the Kirchliche Hochschule Wuppertal-Bethel, conference “Die Septuaginta. Themen — Manuskripte — Wirkungen” (22nd July 2018). I wish to express my sincere thanks to my colleagues with whom I was able to discuss several aspects of this essay, especially Prof. Dr. Luciano Bossina, University of Padua, and Prof. Dr. Eberhard Bons, University of Strasbourg.

¹ J.W. VON GOETHE, *Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre*, book 5, chapter 2.

² For more information concerning the date and milieu of origin, see B.G. WRIGHT, “Sirach (Ecclesiasticus)”, *The T&T Clark Companion to the Septuagint* (ed. J.K. AITKEN) (London 2015) 410-424, here 412-413.

wisdom in a strange land, that is to say, in an environment where he is confronted with experiences and knowledge which are not necessarily bound up with the culture and traditions of Israel ³.

In biblical research some ink has been spilt on the question of the relationship between the author of the book of Sirach and his Hellenistic environment ⁴. I will not enter into the debate about the way in which the author of the book of Sirach views Hellenistic culture in general, especially on the question of whether he adopted a negative or positive attitude towards the Greek influences on his contemporary Jewish society ⁵. Nor do I intend to investigate whether the author had a knowledge of specific texts or passages of non-biblical Greek literature, e.g. Homer, tragedies or historical writings ⁶. My aim is rather more specific. Although the topic of travelling in Sir 31[34],9-11; 39,4; 51,13 has been treated in articles and commentaries ⁷, this issue still merits further study. The scope of my

³ For more detailed considerations about the cultural contacts between Hellenistic Judaism and Greek culture, see F.V. REITERER, "‘In Fact his Life is Unlike that of Others’ (Wisd 2:15): Retaining Identity in a Context of Social Diversity", *BN NF* 164 (2015) 65-85; IDEM, "Zwischen Jerusalem und Alexandria: Alttestamentlicher Glaube im Umfeld hellenistischer Politik und Bildung", *Alexandria* (eds., T. GEORGES et al.) (COMES 1; Tübingen 2013) 245-284.

⁴ For overviews of research on the book of Sirach, see F.V. REITERER, "Text und Buch Ben Sira in Tradition und Forschung", in his *"Alle Weisheit stammt vom Herrn ..."* Gesammelte Studien zu Ben Sira (BZAW 375; Berlin – New York 2007) 3-49; M. GILBERT, "Où en sont les études sur le Siracide?", *Bib* 92 (2011) 161-181.

⁵ See M. HENGEL, *Judaism and Hellenism*. Studies in their Encounter in Palestine during the Early Hellenistic Period (Philadelphia, PA 1974) 138, who quotes Rudolf Smend; on page 150 of this same study Hengel speaks of an "anti-Hellenistic tenor of Ben Sira's thought"; see also the following publications: H.V. KIEWELER, *Ben Sira zwischen Judentum und Hellenismus*. Eine Auseinandersetzung mit Th. Middendorp (BEATAJ 30; Frankfurt 1992); O. WISCHMEYER, *Die Kultur des Buches Jesus Sirach* (BZNW 77; Berlin – New York 1995); IDEM, "Die Konstruktion von Kultur im Sirachbuch", *Texts and Contexts of the Book of Sirach – Texte und Kontexte des Sirachbuches* (eds. G. KARNER – F. UEBERSCHAER – B.M. ZAPFF) (SCSt 66; Atlanta, GA 2017) 71-98. For a nuanced understanding of Ben Sira's relationship with Hellenistic culture, see the recent article by S.L. ADAMS, "Reassessing the Exclusivism of Ben Sira's Jewish Paideia", *Second Temple Jewish Paideia in Context* (eds. J.M. ZURAWSKI – G. BOCCACCINI) (BZNW 228; Berlin – Boston, MA 2017) 47-58, here 50.

⁶ For a discussion of this debated question, see T. MIDDENDORP, *Die Stellung Jesu Ben Siras zwischen Judentum und Hellenismus* (Leiden 1973) Chapter 1; KIEWELER, *Ben Sira zwischen Judentum und Hellenismus*, Chapters 7 and 12.

⁷ See N. CALDUCH-BENAGES, "Elementos de inculturación helenista en el libro de Ben Sira: los viajes", *EstB* 54 (1996) 289-298; IDEM, "Trial Motif in the Book of Ben Sira, with Special Reference to 2,1-6", *The Book of Ben Sira in Modern Research*. Proceedings of the First International Ben Sira Conference 29-31 July 1996 Soesterberg, Netherlands (ed. P.C. BEENTJES) (BZAW 255; Berlin – New York 1997) 135-151, here 145-147; J.-J. LAVOIE, "Ben Sira le voyageur ou la difficile rencontre avec l'hellénisme", *ScEs* 52 (2000) 37-60; F. UEBERSCHAER, *Weisheit aus der Begegnung*. Bildung nach dem Buch Ben

article is to take into account several non-biblical texts that could shed new light on the idea of travelling in the book of Sirach and that at first glance present an original point of view with regard to other Old Testament texts dealing with journeys. I shall pursue the research in two directions. On the one hand, in order to place the three texts of the book of Sirach in a broader socio-cultural context, I shall explore the non-biblical context of the three passages. On the other hand, given that these passages are characterised by the terminology specific to travel and the experience which results from it, I shall discuss extra-biblical texts which contribute to a better understanding of the texts from Sirach. As for the versions of the book, I will focus on the Greek text for two reasons. Firstly, only the Hebrew text of one of the quotations is available in the extant Sirach fragments found since the end of the 19th century, and, secondly, as far as terminology is concerned, only the comparison of the Greek text of the book of Sirach with extra-biblical Greek texts can yield satisfying results.

In the first stage, I shall present the three Greek passages of the book of Sirach as well as the extant Hebrew text of Sir 51,13. I shall then analyse a passage of Plato and three quotations from Philo which contain the theme of travel. Finally, it is necessary to focus on the vocabulary which the Greek text of Sirach has in common with the other texts belonging to Hellenistic-Greek literature so as to understand the biblical text better in the light of his socio-cultural background. On the basis of this information, it is possible to draw conclusions concerning the relationship between travel and wisdom in the book of Sirach.

I. THREE PASSAGES ON TRAVELLING IN THE BOOK OF SIRACH

The passages in which Sirach mentions travel as an experience of personal education particular to the sage are Sir 31[34],9-12; 39,4 and 51,13 ⁸.

Sira (BZAW 379; Berlin – New York 2007) 237-238, 374-375. Among the recent commentaries, see P.W. SKEHAN – A.A. DI LELLA, *The Wisdom of Ben Sira* (AncB 39; New York 1987); G. SAUER, *Jesus Sirach / Ben Sira* (ATD Apokryphen 1; Göttingen 2000); see also the comments aimed at a wider audience in B. ZAPFF, *Jesus Sirach 25–51* (NEB 39; Würzburg 2010); J. CORLEY, *Sirach* (Collegeville, MN 2013); and in M.C. PALMISANO, *Siracide*. Introduzione, traduzione e commento (Cinisello Balsamo 2016).

⁸ For the Greek texts, see J. ZIEGLER, *Sapientia Iesu Filii Sirach*. Septuaginta. Vetus Testamentum Graecum XII/2 (Göttingen ²1980).

	<i>Sir 31[34],9-12</i>	<i>Sir 31[34],9-12</i>
9	Ἀνὴρ πεπλανημένος ἔγνω πολλά καὶ ὁ πολὺπειρος ἐκδιηγῆσεται σύνεσιν·	The one who has travelled has learned much and one who has wide experience expresses himself with intelligence.
10	ὃς οὐκ ἐπειράθη, ὀλίγα οἶδεν, ὁ δὲ πεπλανημένος πληθυνεῖ πανουργίαν.	The one who has not been put to the test knows only a few things, but the one who has travelled is enriched with skills.
11	πολλά ἐώρακα ἐν τῇ ἀποπλανήσει μου, καὶ πλείονα τῶν λόγων μου σύνεσις μου·	I have seen much in the course of my travels, and I have understood more than I know how to say.
12	πλεονάκις ἕως θανάτου ἐκινδύνευσα καὶ διεσώθην τούτων χάριν.	I have often been in danger of death but I have been spared because of these things.
	<i>Sir 39,4</i>	<i>Sir 39,4</i>
	ἀνὰ μέσον μεγιστάνων ὑπηρετήσῃ καὶ ἔναντι ἡγουμένων ὀφθήσεται· ἐν γῇ ἀλλοτριῶν ἐθνῶν διελεύσεται, ἀγαθὰ γὰρ καὶ κακὰ ἐν ἀνθρώποις ἐπείρασεν.	He serves among the great and he makes himself seen among the leaders. He travels in the countries of foreign nations, for he knows from experience what is good and evil among men.
	<i>Sir 51,13</i>	<i>Sir 51,13</i>
	Ἦτι ὦν νεώτερος πρὶν ἢ πλανηθῆναι με ἐζήτησα σοφίαν προφανῶς ἐν προσευχῇ μου.	When I was still young, before travelling, I searched for wisdom strongly in my prayer.

Of these three texts, the only one found in Hebrew is Sir 51,13⁹. In this case we have two manuscripts which disagree with each other, manuscript B of the Cairo Genizah and manuscript 11QPs^A from Qumran¹⁰.

<i>B</i>	<i>11QPs^A</i>
אני נער הייתי וחפצתי בה ובקשתיה	אני נער בטרם תעיתי ובקשתיה
When I was young, I took pleasure in her and searched her out.	When I was young, before I erred/I went on my travels ¹¹ , I sought her [i.e. Wisdom].

⁹ P.C. BEENTJES, *The Book of Ben Sira in Hebrew*. A Text Edition of All Extant Hebrew Manuscripts and a Synopsis of All Parallel Hebrew Ben Sira Texts (Atlanta, GA 2006).

¹⁰ See J.A. SANDERS, *The Psalms Scroll of Qumran Cave 11* (11QPs^a) (Discoveries in the Judean Desert 4; Oxford 1965) 79-85.

¹¹ For the possible translations of the Hebrew verb, see E. PUECH, "La sagesse dans les béatitudes de Ben Sira: étude du texte de Si 51,13-30 et de Si 14,20 – 15,10", *The Texts*

These two texts contain two different variants. Manuscript B does not mention the journey but the feeling of partiality which the sage has manifested for Wisdom since his youth. By contrast, the text 11QPs^A seems to correspond more to the Greek text to the extent that the expression πρὶν ἢ πλανηθῆναι με translates בטרם תעיתי. This translation is easily explained by the background of other LXX texts where the Hebrew verb תעה is rendered by the Greek verb πλανάω, as for example in Genesis 21,14; 37,15; Amos 2,4.

These three passages from the book of Sirach have in common the centrality of the theme of travel. In all of them, in fact, travel seems to assume a very precise function in the sage's life. For him, travel was never associated with the modern idea of entertainment and amusement or that of trade, which is certainly more ancient, but with that of the experience to be acquired by the sage ¹².

II. TRAVELLING TO BE EDUCATED: FOUR PASSAGES FROM PLATO TO PHILO

In this second step I will briefly present two extra-biblical authors, Plato and Philo, whose ideas concerning travelling have some similarities with the passages of the book of Sirach. We can neither prove nor disprove that the author of the book of Sirach or its translator had a direct or an indirect knowledge of Plato's writings, in particular his idea of travelling ¹³.

Plato evokes different reasons for travelling in Book XII of *Laws* (952d-953d). In particular, he distinguishes four categories of travellers: the first is that of the traders who, during the summer, move about from one town to another like migratory birds in order to make money (χρηματισμοῦ χάριν). The second category is associated with the visitors who arrive in foreign towns to participate in public spectacles (θεωρήματα). The third category consists of foreigners entrusted with public missions (κατὰ τι δημόσιον). They must be welcomed free of charge by their equals, for example, by the generals. The fourth category is made up of strangers

and Versions of the Book of Ben Sira. Transmission and Interpretation (eds. J.-S. REY – J. JOOSTEN) (JSJ.S 150; Leiden – Boston, MA 2011) 297-329, here 300.

¹² For the different reasons which led people to travel in antiquity, see K.-W. WEEBER, "Travels", *Brill's New Pauly*. Encyclopaedia of the Ancient World, vol. 14 (Leiden – Boston, MA 2009) 869-879.

¹³ MIDDENDORP, *Die Stellung Jesu Ben Siras zwischen Judentum und Hellenismus*, 9, mentions similarities between Sir 13,14-15 and Plato, *Symposium* 195b, but concludes that Sirach probably used anthologies of Greek texts (p. 33).

of both sexes ¹⁴ characterised by the following qualities: they are people older than fifty, wanting to discover what is better abroad and to enter into dialogue with those in the town who are as wise and rich as they are. Both the guests and their hosts benefit from their exchanges. After the visit, the stranger goes off after having given and received information (953d: τὸ μὲν διδάξας, τὸ δὲ μαθὼν ἀπαλλαττέσθω).

It is certain that Plato's reflections elaborated in his *Laws* are not describing a concrete historical situation, especially the real movement of foreign travellers visiting other Greek towns. Rather, his reasoning consists of a programmatic perspective of a judicial character with the aim of aiding the state and its government to deal with the presence of travellers in the country and to profit from it. That is all the more true if one thinks of the fourth category mentioned by Plato. It concerns scholars whose welcome is desired especially in the houses of other sages so that, in the interest of the state, there may be fruitful exchanges of knowledge and expertise. Although the context is juridical, in distinguishing among these four categories of travellers, Plato describes in a general way the reasons which drive foreigners to move and take themselves to other countries or towns. From this point of view, his reflections have an anthropological dimension.

Philo of Alexandria explains the reasons that induce the individual to travel in a later and different social and political context ¹⁵. In this connection, three passages deserve attention ¹⁶.

In his treatise *De ebrietate* 158, in particular in the context of a reflection on ignorance (ἄγνοια), Philo speaks of knowledge (ἐπιστήμη) as “in a certain way the eyes and ears of the soul” (τρόπον τινὰ ψυχῆς καὶ ὀφθαλμοὶ καὶ ὄτ᾽ ἐστι). According to Philo, knowledge helps people to reject evil and to profit from what is useful (§ 160). This is possible because knowledge desires, among other things, to acquire skills, even if it proves to be necessary to take a boat or to go to the ends of the earth and the ocean in order to see and to learn something more and something new (§ 158: κἂν εἰ πεζεύειν καὶ πλεῖν δεῖ, γῆς καὶ θαλάττης ἄχρι τῶν περάτων ἀφικνεῖται, ἵνα ἴδῃ τι πλεόν ἢ ἀκούσῃ καινότερον). Philo goes further: the desire to acquire skills obliges the intelligence to set out in every sense (§ 159: παραθήγων ἀεὶ διάνοιαν πανταχόσε περιφοιτᾷν

¹⁴ See, 953d-e: ξένους τε καὶ ξένας. For a discussion of this detail, see E.B. ENGLAND, *The Laws of Plato*. Books VII-XII. The Text Edited with Introduction, Notes, etc. (Manchester 1921) 597: “an unexpected revelation of the extent to which Plato upheld the ‘equality of opportunity’ between the sexes”.

¹⁵ For the idea of travelling in Philo, see M.R. NIEHOFF, *Philo of Alexandria*. An Intellectual Biography (New Haven, CT – London 2018) 29.

¹⁶ The following passages of Philo's work are quoted in Spanish translation by CALDUCH BENAGES, “Inculturación helenista”, 296.

ἀναγκάζει), thus creating in the individual an incessant thirst to learn (§ 159: μαθήσεως διψαν ἄληκτον ἐντήκων).

In the second text, the treatise *De migratione Abrami* 216, Philo takes up the subject of travel in commenting on the migration of Abraham. Paying less attention to the call of God who incited Abraham to leave his native land, Philo elaborates a philosophical interpretation of Gen 12,6 which mentions Abraham's journey and arrival at the oak tree in Shechem. For Philo, Abraham's motivation is not reduced to obedience to the divine call. Instead Philo develops the idea that we noted above — a kind of natural desire that leads the individual to learn, even to undertake journeys which lead him to the most distant parts. Philo's argument involves two elements. First, he asserts that the individual never accepts that something has been sufficiently examined, whether it is a matter of realities, bodies or actions (*Migr.* 216: μηδὲν ἀδιερεύνητον τῶν ὄντων μήτε σωμάτων μήτε πραγμάτων ἀπολιπεῖν δικαιοῦν). It is for this reason — and this is the second element in his argument — that the individual is never satisfied with the experiences which he can have in his own country but desires to know what is foreign, even if it is to be found in the most distant places (*Migr.* 216: ὥς μὴ μόνον τοῖς ἐπιχωρίοις ἀρκεῖσθαι, ἀλλὰ καὶ τῶν ξενικῶν καὶ πορρωτάτῳ διωκισμῶν ἐφίεσθαι).

The third text, *De Abrahamo* 65, also mentions various motives for travelling, for example business interests. What Philo highlights, however, are the effects of travelling, regardless of its motives, in particular the knowledge acquired by the individual and the delight which this knowledge brings about (*Abr.* 65: οἱ δὲ ἱστορίαν ὧν πρότερον ἠγνόουν τέρψιν ἄμα καὶ ὠφέλειαν τῇ ψυχῇ παρασκευάζουσιν).

These passages allow us to draw some intermediate conclusions. On the one hand, the three passages have in common the idea that the ultimate aim of travel is knowledge. If Plato's reflections on travel are found in a juridical context which aims at dealing with the movements of foreigners, Philo deepens, rather, the anthropological and cognitive dimensions as well as the importance of knowledge for the life of an individual. Therefore, persons spare no effort to overcome their state of ignorance¹⁷.

Plato and Philo are contemporaries neither of the author nor of the translator of the book of Sirach. However, the three passages analysed

¹⁷ CALDUCH-BENAGES, "Inculturación helenista", 296, observes: "En la época helenística, iniciada con la conquista de Alejandro Magno, la vida se abría a nuevos horizontes. El deseo de salir de los confines de la patria, de conocer nuevas tierras, de experimentar lo desconocido, de establecer relaciones comerciales con otros pueblos, todo esto era propio de la encrucijada cultural que tocó vivir a Ben Sira".

above enable us to situate the texts from Sirach in the broader philosophical context. As for Plato, he points out that persons travel for learning and teaching. As for Philo, who surely was familiar with Plato's works ¹⁸, he develops the necessity of travelling for being educated. Once more it can neither be proved nor excluded that Philo was familiar with the book of Sirach ¹⁹. At any rate, the passages quoted show that the idea of the educational journey belongs not only to non-Jewish authors like Plato. Quite the contrary. A Jewish author like Philo, who is largely influenced by Hellenistic Greek thought (including Plato), makes this ideal his own, presenting Abraham, the patriarch of the people of Israel, as a model traveller, full of curiosity and the desire for knowledge.

In conclusion, Plato, Philo and the book of Sirach appear to share a common idea, the educational value of travelling. However, the vocabulary used by these authors is different and suggests no direct dependence of one text on another. In the following section, I shall analyse the particular vocabulary of voyage and experiences in the Greek text of Sirach. Given that this vocabulary does not offer many similarities with that of the Septuagint, it is necessary to look for further parallels in non-biblical Greek ²⁰.

III. VOYAGE AND EXPERIENCE:

THE GREEK VOCABULARY OF SIRACH COMPARED TO NON-JEWISH USAGE

The first terminological observation concerns the use of the verb *πλανάω* in Sirach 31[34],9; 51,13. Apparently, its meaning of "travel" ²¹ is foreign

¹⁸ For further details, see E. KOSKENNIEMI, *Greek Writers and Philosophers in Philo and Josephus. A Study of Their Secular Education and Educational Ideas* (Studies in Philo of Alexandria 9; Leiden – Boston, MA 2019) 102-106.

¹⁹ *Biblia Patristica. Index des citations et allusions bibliques dans la littérature patristique. Supplément. Philon d'Alexandrie* (eds. J. ALLENBACH et alii) (Strasbourg 1982) 91, quotes some passages of Philo's works that might allude to the book of Sirach. However, Philo never quotes it explicitly, and the allusions seem to be far-fetched. For the biblical texts quoted by Philo, see F. SIEGERT, "Early Jewish Interpretation in a Hellenistic Style", *Hebrew Bible / Old Testament. The History of Its Interpretation. Vol. I. From the Beginnings to the Middle Ages (Until 1300). Part I: Antiquity* (ed. M. SÆBØ) (Göttingen 1996) 130-198, here 172-176.

²⁰ To the best of my knowledge, these parallels are not dealt with in past research on the Greek text of Sirach.

²¹ A. MINISALE, *La versione greca del Siracide. Confronto con il testo ebraico alla luce dell'attività midrascica e del metodo targumico* (AnBib 133; Rome 1995) 140, correctly observes that the verb has the meaning of "sbandamento morale" since the context does not speak of external factors, i.e. travels. It should be taken into consideration, however, that both in 11QPs^a as in the LXX of Sir 51,13 the text speaks of two phases of youth:

to the other books of the Septuagint (including the other occurrences of the verb in the book of Sirach, see e.g. Sir 9,8; 15,12; 16,23) where the verb primarily designates all kinds of wandering or getting lost, whether literally or figuratively ²². By contrast, the meaning “move” or “travel” is attested here and there in passages of non-biblical Greek literature where the connotation of “roaming”, “wandering” gives place to that of an intentional move. Thus, Herodotus, in his *Histories* 2.41.6, mentions the people of Atarbechis, a spot situated in the Nile Delta, who go from town to town to unearth the bones of oxen in order to bury them elsewhere (ἐκ ταύτης τῆς πόλιος πλανῶνται πολλοὶ ἄλλοι ἐς ἄλλας πόλεις, ἀνορύξαντες δὲ τὰ ὀστέα ἀπάγουσι καὶ θάπτουσι ἐς ἓνα χῶρον πάντες) ²³.

While there is no conclusive evidence that Ben Sira's grandson, who was charged with the translation of his grandfather's work, knew the *Histories* of Herodotus, nothing rules out the possibility that he was familiar with the use of πλανᾶω just mentioned.

The second observation concerns the adjective πολῦπειρος found in Sir 31[34],9, in parallel with the verb πειράζω. The book of Sirach is the only text of the Septuagint to employ the adjective πολῦπειρος ²⁴ which is a very rare word in non-biblical Greek literature. It is here used in the

the initial search for Wisdom, and the subsequent activity of πνε/πλανᾶω. Therefore, it can be inferred that the author acquired Wisdom *by means of travelling*, especially in the light of the other passages mentioned in the present article. Accordingly, the *New English Translation of the Septuagint* (New York – Oxford 2007) 761, translates the verse in question as follows: “When I was still young, before I wandered, I sought wisdom plainly in my prayer”. See also the translations by UEBERSCHAER, *Weisheit aus der Begegnung*, 326: “Ich war noch ein Jugendlicher, bevor ich umherwanderte, da hatte ich Gefallen an ihr und suchte sie”; and by PALMISANO, *Siracide*, 499: “Quando ero ancora giovane, prima di viaggiare, ho cercato apertamente la sapienza nella mia preghiera”. For the translation of the Hebrew text of 11QPs^A see note 4 and the following works: GILBERT, “Venez à mon école. Ben Sira 51,13-30”, in his *Ben Sira. Recueil d'études — Collected Essays* (BETL 264; Leuven – Paris – Walpole, MA 2014) 191-199, here 192: “Quand j'étais jeune, avant mes errances, je l'ai demandée et j'ai vraiment prié”; and V. MORLA, *Los manuscritos ebreos de Ben Sira. Traducción y notas* (Estella, Navarra 2012) 354, note 6, who translates the phrase in question as follows: “siendo joven, antes de extraviarme”. J.K. AITKEN, “The Literary and Linguistic Subtlety of the Greek Version of Sirach”, *Texts and Contexts of the Book of Sirach*, 115-140, here 138-139, does not exclude the possibility that the verb πλανᾶω has been chosen for the reason of creating an alliteration.

²² For more details concerning the LXX meanings of πλανᾶω, see T. MURAOKA, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the Septuagint* (Leuven 2009) 560; J. LUST – E. EYNIKEL – K. HAUSPIE, *Greek-English Lexicon of the Septuagint. Revised Edition* (Stuttgart 2008) 494; A.A. GARCÍA SANTOS, *Diccionario del Griego bíblico. Setenta y Nuevo Testamento* (Estella 2011) 686-687.

²³ For a discussion of historical, geographical and archaeological issues, see A.B. LLOYD, *Herodotus. Book 2. Commentary* 1–98 (EPRO 43; Leiden 1984) 187-189.

²⁴ For commentary on this word, see C. WAGNER, *Die Septuaginta-Hapaxlegomena im Buch Jesus Sirach. Untersuchungen zu Wortwahl und Wortbildung unter besonderer*

context of travel that enriches the individual ²⁵. It can be found in Diodorus Siculus, at the beginning of his *Library of History*, 1.1.2, where the author refers to Ulysses, describing him as ὁ πολυπειρότατος, doubtless because of the misfortunes which the hero suffered throughout his life ²⁶.

Another citation, certainly more recent than the Greek translation of Sirach, makes the connection between travels and the great experience which they gain for the individual. It is found in Plutarch's biography of the Greek legislator, Solon (2.1). Here Plutarch emphasises that, according to some, Solon did not travel for economic reasons but to learn and to gain experience. In this passage, Plutarch does not use the adjective πολύπειρος but the substantive πολυπειρία (καίτοι φασὶν ἔνιοι πολυπειρίας ἔνεκα μᾶλλον καὶ ἱστορίας ἢ χρηματισμοῦ πλανηθῆναι τὸν Σόλωνα).

To return to the book of Sirach, some scholars challenge the possibility that this author was influenced by Greek thought ²⁷. While this issue cannot be discussed here at large, it is clear that we can better understand the statements of the Greek text about the importance of travel, which, as we have already seen, constitute a *unicum* in the whole of the Old Testament, in the light of texts which do not belong at all to the Old Testament *milieu*. Compared to the three passages quoted above, the Greek text of Sirach evokes the same conception of travel both at the level of the vocabulary and at that of ideas. These ideas are thus clearly related to the way in which the passages reflect on the pedagogic function of travel in the life of the individual and especially for the sage.

In Sir 31[34], this is made explicit in verses 9-12 where it is said that a man who travels knows many things and that he speaks intelligently thanks to the fact that he has gained experience. In vv. 9-10 the translator constructs a chiasmus in order to highlight the contrast between one who travels and one who does not. The latter, who lacks experience, knows very little (v. 10a: ὃς οὐκ ἐπειράθη ὀλίγα οἶδεν) whereas one who has travelled can do everything because travelling enables him to multiply his skills

Berücksichtigung des textkritischen und übersetzungstechnischen Aspekts (BZAW 282; Berlin – New York 1999) 273-274.

²⁵ LAVOIE, "Ben Sira le voyageur", 51: "Le scribe voyage, non pour augmenter ses connaissances, mais au contraire parce qu'il a éprouvé (*peirazō*) le bien et le mal parmi les autres humains, c'est-à-dire parce qu'il a déjà une expérience de tout ce qui habite l'être humain".

²⁶ As is well known, in the first verse of the *Odyssey* Ulysses is called πολύτροπος, an adjective whose exact meaning is debated. Nevertheless, it does not refer to "frequent travelling"; see A. HEUBECK – S. WEST – J.B. HAINSWORTH, *A Commentary on Homer's Odyssey*. Volume 1. Introduction and Books I-VIII (Oxford 1988) 69-70. See also, K. RÜTER, *Odysseeinterpretationen*. Untersuchungen zum ersten Buch und zur Phaiakis (Hypomnemata 19; Göttingen 1969) 36-37.

²⁷ See references above in note 5.

(v.10b: ὁ δὲ πεπλανημένος πληθυνεῖ πανουργίαν). It turns out that the intelligence (σύνεσις) mentioned at the end of v. 9 is not only the ability of the human spirit to reflect on its environment in abstract terms but also coincides with a wealth of skills which lead the individual to learn how to do everything that is valuable and effective. In this sense, v. 11 presents a kind of summary of the previous statements: “I have seen much in the course of my travels (ἐν τῇ ἀποπλανήσει μου) and I have understood more than I know how to say (πλείονα τῶν λόγων μου σύνεσις μου)”. Ben Sira completes this reflection in v. 12 claiming that it is thanks to his experience that he has known how to save himself even when he has been in mortal danger (πλεονάκις ἕως θανάτου ἐκινδύνευσα)²⁸.

The importance of travel as an opportunity for experience and, thus, of knowledge becomes all the clearer if one considers these statements in the context of chapter 31[34]. In fact, the discourse on travel is introduced by a reflection which describes the vanity of the dream which leads a person to “seize a shadow and pursue the wind” (Sir 31[34],2), an attitude which belongs especially to the foolish.

The second text considered, Sir 39,4, finds its context in vv. 1-15 which describe the figure of the sage and his qualities. Among other things, Ben Sira says of the sage that “he searches the wisdom of all his ancestors and devotes his leisure to the prophecies” (Sir 39,1: σοφίαν πάντων ἀρχαίων ἐκζητήσει καὶ ἐν προφητείαις ἀσχοληθήσεται). However, his role is not solely bound up with the search for and the study of his ancestors, preserving their insights and exploring them with his own intelligence (Sir 39,2). On the contrary, the sage is also one who travels a good deal among the nations, thus experiencing the good and the evil among men (Sir 39,4: ἐν γῇ ἀλλοτριῶν ἔθνων διελεύσεται ἀγαθὰ γὰρ καὶ κακὰ ἐν ἀνθρώποις ἐπέιρασεν)²⁹. This is why the ideal sage can help, even advise, the great and is seen in the company of the leaders (Sir 39,4: ἀνὰ μέσον μεγιστάνων ὑπηρετήσει καὶ ἔναντι ἡγουμένων ὀφθήσεται). Once again, this description of the sage gives us the opportunity to observe that he does not pass his time studying the Scripture without any contact with daily life among the nations. Rather, if the sage devotes his life and his intelligence to understanding the wisdom of the ancients, he will also be

²⁸ For this latter idea, see CALDUCH-BENAGES, “Trial Motif in the Book of Ben Sira”, 146.

²⁹ In this context, one question remains open: Was the author of the book himself a traveller? MIDDENDORP, *Die Stellung Jesu Ben Siras zwischen Judentum und Hellenismus*, 10-12, holds that Ben Sira never left his country. For the opposite opinion, see J. MARBÖCK, *Weisheit im Wandel. Untersuchungen zur Weisheitstheologie bei Ben Sira* (BZAW 272; Berlin – New York ²1999) 161-162; and LAVOIE, “Ben Sira le voyageur”, 52, who holds: “la diaspora juive [...] offrait plusieurs avantages aux Juifs d’Israël qui voulaient voyager”.

open to the ways of life and customs that are foreign to him, growing wiser through the experience of the good and evil that he finds abroad.

Thus, Sir 39,4 presents the sage who, although he is rooted in the sapiential tradition of Israel, does not disdain being educated elsewhere, also valuing what does not belong strictly to his own cultural and religious heritage, notably that of Israel, because of a desire to cultivate a broader and deeper vision of human realities and of his daily surroundings. Sir 39,5 adds that this does not exclude constant contact with his God, something which is indispensable if he is to have a spirit of intelligence. It is remarkable, however, that the memory of this sage will not remain solely in the assembly of his own people but that all the nations will speak of his wisdom (v. 10). For Ben Sira, thus, the sage needs to enter into contact with the world around him, himself becoming a kind of link between Israel and the nations.

Our final passage, Sir 51,13, speaks of the profound interest which Ben Sira has shown in wisdom since his youth, or, as the Greek text says, "before travelling". This passage shows clearly, on the one hand, the need for the sage to be educated, first and foremost in his own milieu (and in that connection we can observe his attachment to wisdom from his youth), and, on the other hand, the desire to get to know other countries and other societies in order to acquire a great experience without which his education would not be complete. Although the privileged place in which he searches for wisdom is prayer and careful reading of the sacred texts, his search does not stop at this point: he has travelled to find it also in the real and daily life of other peoples. It is on the basis of this experience that he invites the people and, particularly, the ἀπαιδευτοί (Sir 51,23), that is, those who are not educated, to come to him in order to learn wisdom.

IV. CONCLUSION

As appears from the Prologue written by the grandson of Ben Sira, his grandfather had an excellent knowledge of the sacred books of Israel, and he sees himself compelled to transmit this knowledge to other people. For him, the sage not only draws on the study of the Scripture, reckoned indispensable for the formation of the identity of the true Israelite, but also appreciates travel because it enables him to compare the wisdom of other peoples to his own tradition. As has been illustrated in this article, this idea is not strange to the non-Jewish world. Rather, Ben Sira seems to share it with the educated people of other countries who cultivate the desire to

be educated while travelling. He is well aware that there is wisdom in the traditions of the other peoples too, for God has granted it to the whole of humanity (Sir 1,10), and that is why it is necessary to know it in order to discern good and evil.

Faculté de Théologie Catholique
Université de Strasbourg
Palais Universitaire
9, Place de l'Université
F - 67000 Strasbourg Cedex

Daniela SCIALABBA

SUMMARY

This article deals with three passages from the book of Sirach (Sir 31[34],9-11; 39,4; 51,13) that have one idea in common: the sage develops his wisdom in a strange land where he is confronted with experiences and knowledge which are independent of the culture and traditions of Israel. Several non-biblical texts are taken into consideration to shed new light on the idea of travelling in the book of Sirach. On the level of ideas, Plato distinguishes between four kinds of travellers, including those who travel for educational purposes. Some centuries later Philo deepens the anthropological and cognitive dimensions of travelling. However, the closest parallels to the terminology of Sir 31[34],9-10; 51,13, especially the use of *πλανάω* and *πολύπειρος*, can be found in works of more recent date by Diodorus of Sicily and Plutarch.

LA NOVITÀ DEL REGNO: KAINOS NEL VANGELO DI MARCO

In greco ci sono due aggettivi per esprimere l'idea di novità: *καὶνός* e *νέος*. Di solito, i lessicografi stabiliscono una distinzione di significato tra questi due termini: il primo si riferirebbe a una novità in senso qualitativo, il secondo a ciò che è nuovo in senso cronologico ¹. Sebbene il confine tra i due significati sia talora estremamente labile (come hanno mostrato i richiamati studi di R.A. Harrisville e come riscontreremo anche in Mc 2,22), tale distinzione sembra essere tenuta in conto dagli autori neotestamentari, che prediligono *καὶνός* per riferirsi alla singolarità di ciò che contraddistingue il tempo ultimo ². Già nell'AT questo aggettivo si riferisce non di rado all'azione salvifica di Dio attesa per il tempo finale, indicando le cose nuove (Is 42,9; 43,18-19) e il nuovo cielo e la nuova terra (Is 65,17; 66,22) che Dio avrebbe realizzato, o la nuova alleanza che egli avrebbe stipulato con Israele (Ger 38,31 LXX), oppure il cuore e lo spirito nuovi che egli avrebbe donato al suo popolo (Ez 11,19; 18,31; 36,26). Nel NT *καὶνός* è spesso impiegato per definire le realtà nuove che sono conseguenza della salvezza operata da Cristo: *nuova* alleanza (Lc 22,20; 1Cor 11,25; 2Cor 3,6; Eb 8,8.13; 9,15), *nuova* creazione (2Cor 5,17; Gal 6,15), *nuovi* cieli e *nuova* terra (2Pt 3,13; Ap 21,1), *nuova* Gerusalemme (Ap 3,12; 21,2), uomo *nuovo* (Ef 2,15; 4,24) comandamento *nuovo* (Gv 13,34; 1Gv 2,7.8; 2Gv 1,5), cose *nuove* (2Cor 5,17; Ap 21,5) ³. Alla luce di queste espressioni, gli studi di Harrisville hanno focalizzato il significato generale del concetto di novità nel NT, senza entrare nel merito dei singoli libri.

Il nostro contributo limita il suo campo d'indagine al vangelo di Marco. D'altronde, non si può trascurare che *καὶνός* ricorre con maggiore frequenza in Marco (4 volte) rispetto agli altri vangeli (4 occorrenze in Matteo, che è più ampio, 3 in Luca, 2 in Giovanni), evidenziandone una

¹ Si veda, ad esempio, J. BEHM, “καὶνός”, *ThWNT* III, 449-450. Per la storia dell'interpretazione di questi due aggettivi, si vedano i contributi di R.A. HARRISVILLE, “The Concept of Newness in the New Testament”, *JBL* 74 (1955) 69-79; IDEM, *The Concept of Newness in the New Testament* (Minneapolis, MN 1960) 1-11.

² Cf. BEHM, “καὶνός”, 451.

³ Anche l'aggettivo *νέος* è impiegato nella costruzione di tali espressioni (uomo *nuovo* in Col 3,10 e *nuova* alleanza in Eb 12,24), ma la sua ricorrenza in questo senso è più limitata.

certa rilevanza e giustificando il proposito di questo nostro studio ⁴. Ad oggi, a nostra conoscenza, solo due contributi si sono interessati a questo tema. In un articolo di qualche anno fa, D.A. Hagner ha focalizzato la nozione di «novità» in Marco ponendola in relazione con quella di «Vangelo», senza però entrare nello specifico delle singole occorrenze del vocabolo καινός ⁵. Recentemente, una studiosa italiana, E. Raponi, ha concentrato la sua attenzione su καινός in Marco, limitando però la sua indagine al passo di Mc 1,27 e al riferimento alla διδασχὴ καινή di Gesù ivi contenuto ⁶.

Il presente articolo si propone di vagliare il significato dell'aggettivo καινός in ciascuna delle sue occorrenze marciiane (Mc 1,27; 2,21.22; 14,25), desumendolo dal contesto narrativo in cui esse sono inserite. Mediante un approccio sincronico analizzeremo le pericopi di Mc 1,21-28; 2,18-22; 14,22-25 non con il proposito di fornirne un'esegesi dettagliata e completa, ma nella misura in cui tale analisi consentirà di mettere in luce il significato dell'aggettivo in questione. La nostra tesi è che καινός sia utilizzato da Marco in stretto riferimento alla nozione di «regno di Dio». In ciascuna delle tre pericopi l'aggettivo allude a uno dei tre momenti in cui l'evento del Regno si dispiega: il suo approssimarsi in Gesù (Mc 1,14-15), la sua crescita (Mc 4,26-32) e il compimento finale (Mc 9,1; 14,25). In tal senso, il concetto marciano di «novità» emergerà nella sua relazione con la nozione di «regno di Dio», metafora della salvezza finale che Dio opera in Gesù. Pertanto, il significato di καινός in Marco sarà coerente con le suddette occorrenze neotestamentarie di quest'aggettivo, dove il termine assume connotazioni escatologiche.

I. “UN INSEGNAMENTO NUOVO” (Mc 1,27)

L'aggettivo καινός ricorre per la prima volta in Marco nella pericope di Mc 1,21-28. Posto dopo l'annuncio inaugurale dell'approssimarsi del Regno (Mc 1,14-15) e la chiamata dei primi discepoli (Mc 1,16-20), questo passo ha valore programmatico, anticipando diversi motivi della narrazione marciiana: si pensi all'insegnamento, al conflitto con le autorità

⁴ Dal nostro computo abbiamo escluso Mc 16,17 (γλώσσαις καιναῖς), appartenente alla finale canonica del secondo vangelo (Mc 16,9-20), considerata postuma dalla maggioranza degli studiosi.

⁵ D.A. HAGNER, “The Newness of the Gospel in Mark and Matthew: Continuity and Discontinuity”, *Matthew and Mark across Perspectives. Essays in Honour of Stephen C. Barton and William R. Telford* (eds. K.A. BENDORAITIS – N.K. GUPTA) (London – New York 2016) 70-74.

⁶ E. RAPONI, *Il significato dell'aggettivo ΚΑΙΝΟΣ in Mc 1,27* (Roma 2016).

giudaiche (in particolare con gli scribi), alle ingiunzioni al silenzio e allo stupore⁷. Non è un caso che, all'inizio del ministero di Gesù, Marco ponga un esorcismo: il secondo vangelo attribuisce particolare rilevanza all'attività esorcistica di Gesù. L'ampia cornice di questa pericope, composta dall'esposizione iniziale (Mc 1,21-22) e dalla conclusione (Mc 1,27-28), conferisce una certa enfasi a questo racconto. L'aggettivo *καινός* ricorre nell'epilogo della pericope, quando, in seguito all'esorcismo, i presenti nella sinagoga riconoscono come «nuovo» l'insegnamento autorevole di Gesù (Mc 1,27).

Il motivo di tale riconoscimento è tutt'altro che evidente. La maggioranza degli studiosi ritiene che la novità dell'insegnamento di Gesù risieda nella sua *ἐξουσία*, che si esprime nella forza della sua parola didattica ed esorcistica⁸. Secondo altri autori, invece, la novità dell'insegnamento di Gesù, fondata sulla sua autorità, sarebbe affermata per distinguere la sua attività didattica e la sua autorità da quelle degli scribi⁹. È certamente innegabile un legame tra la novità dell'insegnamento di Gesù e la sua autorità. Tuttavia, il significato di *καινή* non è assimilabile *tout-court* a quello dell'espressione *κατ'ἐξουσίαν*, anch'essa riferita alla *διδασχὴ* di Gesù. In tal caso, infatti, sorgerebbe un interrogativo: perché gli astanti avrebbero definito «nuovo» l'insegnamento soltanto in Mc 1,27, quando già prima dell'esorcismo il narratore ci informa che essi avevano riconosciuto Gesù come maestro autorevole (Mc 1,22)? Inoltre, considerato in quest'accezione, l'aggettivo *καινή* sarebbe ridondante rispetto al sintagma *κατ'ἐξουσίαν* (v. 27). La stessa obiezione può essere avanzata per l'ipotesi secondo cui *καινή* intende connotare l'insegnamento di Gesù come

⁷ Si vedano A.M. AMBROZIC, "New Teaching with Power (Mk 1:27)", *Word and Spirit. Essays in Honor of David Michael Stanley, S.J., on his 60th Birthday* (ed. J. PLEVNIK) (Willowdale 1975) 114; O.I. OKO, "Who Then Is This?". A Narrative Study of the Role of the Question of the Identity of Jesus in the Plot of Mark's Gospel (BBB 148; Berlin – Wien 2004) 102. J. LAGRANDE, "The First of the Miracle Stories According to Mark (1:21-28)", *CThMi* 20 (1993) 480, parla di «archetypal miracle».

⁸ Così HARRISVILLE, *Concept*, 25; R.T. FRANCE, "Mark and the Teaching of Jesus", *Gospel Perspectives. Studies of History and Tradition in the Four Gospels* (eds. R.T. FRANCE – D. WENHAM) (Sheffield 1980) 106; R.H. GUNDRY, *Mark. A Commentary on His Apology for the Cross* (Grand Rapids, MI 1993) 77; J.C. IWE, *Jesus in the Synagogue of Capernaum. The Pericope and Its Programmatic Character for the Gospel of Mark. An Exegetico-Theological Study of Mk 1:21-28* (TG.T 57; Roma 1999) 103-104, 184; C. FOCANT, *L'évangile selon Marc* (Commentaire biblique: Nouveau Testament 2; Paris 2004) 89; J. DELORME, *L'heureuse annonce selon Marc. Lecture intégrale du deuxième évangile* (LD 219, 223; Paris – Montréal 2007-2008) I, 121.

⁹ Si vedano L. SCHENKE, *Die Wundererzählungen des Markusevangeliums* (SBB 5; Stuttgart 1974) 98; P. GUILLEMETTE, "Un enseignement nouveau, plein d'autorité", *NovT* 22 (1980) 242; B.D. CHILTON, "Exorcism and History: Mark 1:21-28", *Gospel Perspectives. The Miracles of Jesus* (eds. D. WENHAM – C. BLOMBERG) (Sheffield 1986) 256.

non-scribale: se l'autorità è stata già indicata come discrimine tra l'attività didattica di Gesù e quella degli scribi (v. 22), l'aggettivo *καινή* risulta superfluo in presenza di *κατ' ἐξουσίαν*. È evidente, dunque, che il significato di *καινή* in Mc 1,27 non possa essere ricondotto semplicemente all'autorità di Gesù.

Altri autori legano la novità dell'insegnamento di Gesù all'esorcismo da lui compiuto subito prima (Mc 1,23-26). Questa posizione sorge da una considerazione globale della pericope di Mc 1,21-28. Se i presenti nella sinagoga percepiscono l'autorità dell'insegnamento di Gesù in Mc 1,22 e ne riconoscono la «novità» in Mc 1,27, è bene legare il significato di *καινή* alla cacciata dello spirito impuro, riferita ai vv. 23-26. Questi studiosi parlano di un significato escatologico dell'aggettivo «nuovo», riferito all'insegnamento di Gesù: esso esprimerebbe la definitiva sconfitta delle forze del male, conseguenza dell'azione salvifica di Dio nel tempo finale¹⁰. Un tentativo di conciliare quest'interpretazione con quella precedente è formulata da Raponi: «Se la *διδασχὴ* è definita *καινή* (Mc 1,27) solo dopo l'esorcismo, è perché è divenuta una parola salvifica nel miracolo grazie all'*ἐξουσία*, che qui si è manifestata come potere di liberare dagli spiriti impuri. Perciò, ciò che rende nuova la *διδασχὴ* di Gesù è la sua capacità di compiere la salvezza, che le deriva dall'essere "secondo autorità". Infatti, poiché l'*ἐξουσία* di Gesù si esercita sugli spiriti impuri [...], allora essa realizza la salvezza di Dio, ovvero sconfigge il male, liberando gli uomini dai demoni o dagli spiriti impuri»¹¹.

A nostro parere, l'intuizione di questo secondo gruppo di studiosi è corretta: il significato della novità dell'insegnamento di Gesù (Mc 1,27) va ricercato alla luce dell'esorcismo da lui compiuto subito prima (1,23-26). Pertanto, la nostra interpretazione sarà uno sviluppo di tale proposta.

1. *L'insegnamento di Gesù (Mc 1,21-22)*

La pericope si apre con un'ampia esposizione, che fornisce l'ambientazione spazio-temporale dell'episodio: la sinagoga di Cafarnao, in giorno di sabato. La duplice ricorrenza del verbo *διδάσκω* e quella del sostantivo *διδασχὴ* enfatizzano l'attività didattica di Gesù, mentre l'uso di un imperfetto (*ἐδίδασκεν*) e della costruzione perifrastica *ἦν διδάσκων* ne indicano il carattere continuativo. Con l'eccezione di Mc 6,30 (dove se ne fa

¹⁰ Così K. KERTELGE, *Die Wunder Jesu im Markusevangelium* (SANT 23; München 1970) 57; AMBROZIC, "Teaching", 125; R.A. GUELICH, *Mark 1 – 8:26* (WBC34A; Dallas, TX 1989) 58-59; M. KARRER, "Der lehrende Jesus: Neutestamentliche Erwägungen", ZNW 83 (1992) 13.

¹¹ RAPONI, *Significato*, 196.

menzione anche per i Dodici), l'insegnamento è un tratto peculiare del ministero di Gesù, molto rimarcato da Marco nel corso della sua narrazione. In questa prima menzione l'evangelista ne fornisce le coordinate fondamentali. Il lettore è certamente sorpreso dall'assenza di qualsiasi indicazione riguardo al contenuto di tale insegnamento. Tuttavia, in virtù del carattere programmatico dell'annuncio sull'avvicinamento del regno di Dio (Mc 1,14-15), egli può supporre che il Vangelo del Regno costituisca l'oggetto fondamentale dell'insegnamento di Gesù. A tal proposito, scrive bene J. Dechow: «Der Inhalt seiner Belehrung wird nicht angegeben. Es legt sich den Lesenden nahe, ihn von Mk 1,15 her zu bestimmen, der bis dahin einzigen Darstellung des Verkündigungsinhalts Jesu. Die Verwendung des Begriffes διδάσκω statt — wie in 1,14f. — κηρύσσω widerspricht dem nicht, denn beide Begriffe werden von Markus austauschbar behandelt»¹².

L'attività didattica di Gesù è qualificata da due aspetti, che sono alla base dello stupore generato negli astanti. Anzitutto, essi restano stupiti dall'autorità che Gesù dimostra mentre insegna. Se è difficile determinare cosa abbia portato i presenti a definire autorevole l'insegnamento di Gesù, il lettore sa perché il narratore definisce Gesù come uno che ha autorità. La precedente narrazione (Mc 1,1-15) evidenzia la sua stretta relazione con Dio: egli è il più Forte per il quale Giovanni aveva preparato la via e che avrebbe inaugurato il tempo finale (Mc 1,2-8), sul quale era disceso lo Spirito Santo e che Dio aveva dichiarato suo Figlio (Mc 1,9-11), che era stato messo alla prova da Satana e al quale gli angeli avevano prestato servizio (1,12-13), che aveva inaugurato la predicazione del regno di Dio (Mc 1,14-15)¹³. L'autorità di Gesù è dovuta alla sua relazione con Dio. Questa conclusione è confermata dalla considerazione dei successivi passi marcani in cui gli scribi mettono in questione l'autorità di Gesù. In Mc 2,10 Gesù si attribuisce l'autorità di rimettere i peccati, propria di Dio (Mc 2,7), mentre la controversia di Mc 11,27-33 è incentrata

¹² J. DECHOW, *Gottessohn und Herrschaft Gottes*. Der Theozentrismus des Markus-evangeliums (WMANT 86; Neukirchen-Vluyn 2000) 83. Dello stesso avviso J. GNILKA, *Das Evangelium nach Markus* (EKK 2; Neukirchen-Vluyn 1978-1979) I, 78; GUILLEMETTE, "Enseignement", 239. Per la funzione programmatica di Mc 1,14-15 in relazione a Mc 1,16-8,26, si veda C.D. MARSHALL, *Faith as a Theme in Mark's Narrative* (MSSNTS 64; Cambridge 1989) 38-39. D'interscambiabilità tra i verbi διδάσκω e κηρύσσω parlano S. LÉGASSE, *L'Évangile de Marc* (LD Commentaires 5; Paris 1997) 123; J. MARCUS, *Mark 1-8*. A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary (AB 27; New Haven, CT - London 2000) 187; R.H. STEIN, *Mark* (BECNT; Grand Rapids, MI 2008) 85.

¹³ Cf. K. SCHOLTISSEK, *Die Vollmacht Jesu*. Traditions- und redaktionsgeschichtliche Analysen zu einem Leitmotiv markinischer Christologie (NTA 25; Münster 1992) 127-137; C.S. PERO, *Liberation from Empire*. Demonic Possession and Exorcism in the Gospel of Mark (SBLit 150; New York 2013) 137.

sull'origine divina della sua autorità. Perciò, l'ἐξουσία di Gesù è contraddistinta dalla sua qualità divina.

Su questo punto l'insegnamento di Gesù differisce da quello scribale, secondo elemento percepito dai presenti. A Gesù non è riconosciuta l'autorità dei rabbini (la *reshut*), superiore rispetto a quella posseduta dai γραμματεῖς, di grado inferiore ¹⁴. Il *tertium comparationis* nel confronto tra Gesù e gli scribi non è l'autorità, bensì l'insegnamento ¹⁵. E l'insegnamento degli scribi, a differenza di quello di Gesù, non è caratterizzato da alcuna ἐξουσία, perché non viene da Dio, ma dagli uomini (cf. Mc 7,6-8) ¹⁶. Contrapponendone gli insegnamenti, il narratore stabilisce fin dall'inizio un'ostilità irriducibile tra Gesù e gli scribi, i principali avversari di Gesù nel secondo vangelo ¹⁷. In virtù dell'opposizione che Marco stabilirà tra vie divine e vie umane (cf. Mc 10,9,27; 11,30), assimilata al contrasto tra Dio e le forze sataniche (cf. Mc 8,32-33), l'insegnamento scribale può essere considerato, con le parole di A.M. Ambrozic, «destructive of God's word and command; it is part and parcel of their consistent hostility, in word and deed, to the Son with whom the Father is well pleased (1:11), and thus participates in Satan's and the demons' opposition to Jesus» ¹⁸. In tal senso, tale contrapposizione prepara il successivo racconto di esorcismo.

2. Gesù e gli spiriti impuri (Mc 1,23-26)

L'attività didattica di Gesù nella sinagoga suscita subito la reazione di un uomo posseduto da uno spirito impuro. In quanto esseri sovranaturali, gli spiriti impuri avvertono la minaccia costituita dalla presenza di Gesù (cf. Mc 5,6; 9,20), come evidenziano le parole successive, che chiariscono la relazione tra Gesù e il mondo demoniaco.

L'espressione semitica τί ἡμῖν καὶ σοί stabilisce una netta contrapposizione tra due sfere di competenza e potere. Sottendendo una risposta negativa, essa indica una distanza e una mancanza di relazione tra le due

¹⁴ È l'ormai superata tesi di D. DAUBE, "ἐξουσία in Mark I.22 and 27", *JTS* 39 (1938) 45-59.

¹⁵ Così SCHOLTISSEK, *Vollmacht*, 124-125; R.J. DILLON, "«As One Having Authority» (Mark 1:22): The Controversial Distinction of Jesus' Teaching", *CBQ* 57 (1995) 103; IWE, *Jesus*, 61-62.

¹⁶ Cf. AMBROZIC, "Teaching", 120-121; J.D. KINGSBURY, *The Christology of Mark's Gospel* (Philadelphia, PA 1983) 75-76; DILLON, "Authority", 103; MARCUS, *Mark 1-8*, 192; A. YARBRO COLLINS, *Mark. A Commentary* (Hermeneia; Minneapolis, MN 2007) 165.

¹⁷ Per la caratterizzazione degli scribi in Marco, si veda A. MALINA, *Gli scribi nel vangelo di Marco*. Studio del loro ruolo nella sua narrazione e teologia (Katowice 2002).

¹⁸ AMBROZIC, "Teaching", 120-121.

parti in causa ¹⁹. Come confermerà l'affermazione conclusiva (Mc 1,27), il plurale ἡμῶν mostra che tale contrapposizione con Gesù non riguarda soltanto lo spirito impuro implicato in questo episodio, ma l'intero mondo demoniaco. Alla luce di tale delimitazione di campo, è difficile pensare che la successiva menzione del nome (Ἰησοῦ Ναζαρηνέ) sia un tentativo del demonio di acquisire una qualche forma di controllo su Gesù o di impedirne l'intervento, in ossequio alla classica teoria di O. Bauernfeind (in seguito ripresa da molti autori), secondo la quale la pronuncia del nome di una divinità o del demonio da parte dell'esorcista garantisce il controllo sul demonio stesso ²⁰. Se, come dimostrerà subito, lo spirito impuro conosce perfettamente l'identità di Gesù e la finalità della sua missione, come può anche soltanto pensare di opporsi a lui ²¹? È più probabile che la menzione del nome di Gesù e del suo villaggio d'origine rimandino piuttosto a Mc 1,9 (unico passo marciano in cui si allude a Nazareth), inaugurando una serie di richiami alla pericope di Mc 1,9-11, che funge da orizzonte di comprensione per questo testo ²².

La seconda espressione delle parole demoniache presenta un'ambiguità, poiché può essere interpretata come affermazione o come domanda. Nota bene R.H. Gundry: «Taken as a declaration [...] (it) shows further knowledge on the part of the unclean spirit. Taken as a question, [...] the words show fear as well as further knowledge. Either way, we catch a foregleam of the destruction about to take place» ²³. Anche in questo caso il pronome di prima persona plurale (ἡμᾶς) allude all'intero mondo demoniaco: la venuta di Gesù rappresenta una minaccia per tutti gli spiriti impuri. Il verbo ἤλθε non denota qui uno spostamento locale, bensì allude alla missione di Gesù, mentre l'infinito ἀπολέσαι (con valore finale) indica lo scopo di tale missione ²⁴. Quello nella sinagoga di Cafarnao non sarà un

¹⁹ Sul significato di quest'espressione idiomatica si vedano O. BÄCHLI, ««Was habe ich mit Dir zu schaffen?» Eine formelhafte Frage im A.T. und N.T.», *ThZ* 33 (1977) 69-80; A.H. MAYNARD, «ΤΙ ΕΜΟΙ ΚΑΙ ΣΟΙ», *NTS* 31 (1985) 582-586.

²⁰ Si veda O. BAUERNFEIND, *Die Worte der Dämonen im Markusevangelium* (BWANT 44; Stuttgart 1927). Per un'ampia confutazione di questa tesi si vedano D.-A. KOCH, *Die Bedeutung der Wundererzählungen für die Christologie des Markusevangeliums* (BNZW 42; Berlin 1975) 55-61; P. GUILLEMETTE, «Mc 1,24 est-il une formule de défense magique?», *ScEs* 30 (1978) 81-96; SCHOLTISSEK, *Vollmacht*, 95-102.

²¹ Si vedano H. GIESEN, «Dämonenaustreibungen – Erweis der Nähe der Herrschaft Gottes. Zu Mk 1,21-28», *ThG* 32 (1989) 29-30; E. BEST, *The Temptation and the Passion. The Markan Soteriology* (MSSNTS 2; Cambridge ²1990) 17; STEIN, *Mark*, 88.

²² Come affermato da FOCANT, *Évangile*, 91, l'ipotesi secondo cui vi sarebbe un gioco di parole tra Ναζαρηνός e il successivo ὁ ἅγιος τοῦ θεοῦ è poco probabile. Così, invece, F. MUSSNER, «Ein Wortspiel in Mk 1,24?», *BZ* 4 (1960) 285-286.

²³ GUNDRY, *Mark*, 76.

²⁴ Per questo significato del verbo ἐρχομαι si veda lo studio di E.F. ARENS, *The HΛΘON-Sayings in the Synoptic Tradition. A Historical-Critical Investigation* (OBO 10; Göttingen 1976) 219-221.

episodio isolato, ma diverrà evento paradigmatico per il successivo ministero di Gesù. Inoltre, il lettore non può ignorare un legame (per quanto generico) con le occorrenze di ἔρχομαι presenti finora nella narrazione. In Mc 1,8 il più forte è definito come colui che sarebbe venuto a battezzare in Spirito Santo e questa predizione del Battista sembra realizzarsi subito con la venuta di Gesù al Giordano (Mc 1,9), dove Gesù è ricolmato dello Spirito Santo (Mc 1,10). Inoltre, lo stesso verbo si ritrova nel sommario programmatico sulla predicazione del Regno (Mc 1,14-15). Intessendo i fili della trama narrativa marciana, il lettore può intuire che la distruzione dei demoni avviene nella potenza dello Spirito ricevuto da Gesù ed è da interpretare alla luce dell'approssimarsi del Regno.

L'affermazione finale del demonio conferma questa prospettiva. A differenza degli esorcismi successivi, dove i demoni identificano Gesù come Figlio di Dio (Mc 3,11; 5,7), lo spirito impuro definisce Gesù come «santo di Dio». Con questa espressione egli non intende identificare Gesù né con il sommo sacerdote messianico né con un nazireo ²⁵. Piuttosto, i demoni riconoscono in Gesù colui che è colmo dello Spirito Santo, disceso su di lui nella teofania del Giordano (Mc 1,10-11), nella cui potenza egli opera e svolge la sua attività esorcistica (cf. Mc 3,22-30). D'altronde, in Marco l'aggettivo ἅγιος si riferisce quasi sempre allo Spirito Santo (Mc 1,8; 3,29; 12,36; 13,11). Per l'interpretazione di questo appellativo attribuito a Gesù non si deve dimenticare, inoltre, la radicale contrapposizione che, nell'immaginario giudaico, vi era tra «santo» (ἅγιος) e «impuro» (ἀκάθαρτος): in quanto «santo di Dio», Gesù è agli antipodi rispetto agli spiriti «impuri».

Lungi dall'essere un tentativo apotropaico di difesa, le parole dello spirito impuro sono un riconoscimento della propria inferiorità dinanzi alla potenza e all'autorità di Gesù. La reazione di quest'ultimo conferma questa prospettiva: egli rimprovera lo spirito, ingiungendogli di tacere e di uscire dall'uomo (Mc 1,25), e le sue parole si realizzano immediatamente (Mc 1,26).

3. *La novità del Regno approssimatosi (Mc 1,27)*

Dopo l'esorcismo il racconto non dice più nulla sull'uomo esorcizzato. Inoltre, nessuna reazione degli astanti è suscitata dalla rivelazione dell'identità di Gesù urlata dallo spirito impuro, che essi hanno certamente

²⁵ Per l'identificazione con il sommo sacerdote messianico, fondata sul passo di Sal 105,16 (LXX), in cui Aronne è definito ὁ ἅγιος κυρίου, si vedano E. LOHMEYER, *Das Evangelium des Markus* (KEK I/2; Göttingen ¹⁶1963) 37; W. GRUNDMANN, *Das Evangelium nach Markus* (ThHK 2; ¹⁰1989) 60. A favore della considerazione di Gesù come nazireo (sulla base di Gdc 13,7 e 16,17, dove Sansone è appellato ἅγιος θεου) è R.A. CULPEPPER, *Mark* (Macon, GA 2007) 56.

sentito, nonostante l'ingiunzione al silenzio di Gesù. Lo stupore dei presenti, invece, sembra provocato dall'esorcismo, come suggerito dall'interrogativo che essi si pongono: τί ἐστὶν τοῦτο; (v. 27). Mentre in altri casi un intervento miracoloso di Gesù suscita una domanda sulla sua identità (cf. Mc 4,41), qui oggetto della meraviglia degli astanti è l'azione di Gesù ²⁶. La successiva affermazione (καὶ τοῖς πνεύμασι τοῖς ἀκαθάρτοις ἐπιτάσσει, καὶ ὑπακούουσιν αὐτῷ) conferma che l'interrogativo è dovuto all'esorcismo. Lo stesso si può dire per l'esclamazione che precede quest'affermazione (διδαχὴ καινὴ κατ' ἐξουσίαν), dove l'insegnamento di Gesù non è soltanto riconosciuto autorevole (come in Mc 1,22), ma è definito anche «nuovo». Solo dopo l'esorcismo, l'insegnamento di Gesù secondo autorità è qualificato con l'aggettivo καινὴ. La novità, dunque, è da ricercare nel significato dell'esorcismo di Gesù, che gli astanti esprimono con tale aggettivo, intuendolo soltanto. Il lettore, invece, ha più elementi in merito, grazie alle informazioni contenute nell'introduzione di Mc 1,1-15 e nei versetti precedenti della nostra pericope. Inoltre, procedendo lungo la narrazione marciana, egli troverà il significato degli esorcismi esplicitamente chiarito da Gesù nella risposta all'accusa degli scribi di scacciare i demoni nel nome di Beelzebul (Mc 3,22-30). Gli esorcismi, compiuti da Gesù nella potenza dello Spirito, sono il segno della fine del dominio di Satana e dell'avvento del regno di Dio. Perciò, come afferma R.J. Dillon, in Mc 1,21-28 «the exorcism becomes a symbol for the *new* reality of God's reign» ²⁷. Operato nella medesima autorità che caratterizza l'attività didattica, esso è integrato da Marco come parte costitutiva dell'insegnamento autorevole di Gesù sul regno di Dio. Possiamo dunque concludere con le parole di O.I. Oko: «What is essentially *new* and unique about Jesus' teaching can be understood against the background of his programmatic word concerning the nearness of God's reign (1,14f.) by which all creation will be ultimately restored to divine rule and purpose» ²⁸.

II. «VINO NUOVO IN OTRI NUOVI» (Mc 2,21-22)

Le successive occorrenze dell'aggettivo καινός si trovano nei *logia* parabolici di Mc 2,21-22, inseriti nel passo di Mc 2,18-22. In maniera

²⁶ Ciò non toglie che l'interrogativo sottenda anche un significato cristologico: la domanda sull'azione di Gesù non può essere scissa da quella sulla sua identità. Si vedano KERTELGE, *Wunder*, 57; KINGSBURY, *Christology*, 82; OKO, "Who", 99-100.

²⁷ DILLON, "Authority", 98.

²⁸ OKO, "Who", 97. Così anche GNILKA, *Evangelium I*, 82; KINGSBURY, *Christology*, 76; SCHOLTISSEK, *Vollmacht*, 123-124.

quasi unanime, questa pericope è ritenuta il cuore della sezione delle controversie galilaiche (Mc 2,1 – 3,6), caratterizzata da una struttura concentrica. Come di solito avviene in testi così strutturati, la pericope centrale (qui Mc 2,18-22) costituisce la chiave interpretativa dell'intera sezione ²⁹.

In questo contesto, che vede ripetutamente Gesù a confronto con i gruppi giudaici (scribi e farisei), diversi autori interpretano i detti di Mc 2,21-22 nella prospettiva del superamento: la novità del regno di Dio pone fine a ciò che è vecchio, identificato con il giudaismo e le sue pratiche ³⁰. Sempre nella prospettiva secondo la quale ciò che è nuovo è superiore a ciò che è antico, altri studiosi ritengono che in questi *logia* la novità del Regno sia contrapposta alla vecchiezza della realtà cosmica dominata dal male e dal peccato ³¹.

La nostra analisi mostrerà che i *logia* di Mc 2,21-22 non implicano l'idea di un superamento. Prima, però, è opportuno soffermarsi brevemente sui vv. 18-20, che costituiscono un orizzonte di comprensione imprescindibile per questi detti.

1. Una questione di tempi (Mc 2,18-20)

Fra le numerose interpretazioni di questi versetti, tre proposte possono essere considerate le più importanti. Affermatasi soprattutto nell'ambito della *Formgeschichte*, che considera i vv. 19b-20 come un'aggiunta secondaria a una tradizione originale, la prima interpretazione è quella eziologica: Mc 2,18-20 intenderebbe giustificare la prassi di digiuno della comunità cristiana nel tempo post-pasquale. Studi più recenti, invece, enfatizzano il significato cristologico di questi versetti: essi indicherebbero in Gesù lo Sposo messianico o divino, identificato con YHWH nelle profezie veterotestamentarie. Queste prime due interpretazioni sono

²⁹ Pur con divergenze di vedute, prospettano una struttura concentrica per la sezione Mc 2,1 – 3,6 J. DEWEY, *Markan Public Debate. Literary Technique, Concentric Structure, and Theology in Mark 2:1 – 3:6* (SBLDS 48; Chico, CA 1980) 109-130; W. THISSEN, *Erzählung der Befreiung. Eine exegetische Untersuchung zu Mk 2,1 – 3,6* (FB 21; Würzburg 1976) 151-186; J. KILUNEN, *Die Vollmacht in Widerstreit. Untersuchungen zum Werdegang von Mk. 2,1 – 3,6* (Helsinki 1985) 65-84; C. FOCANT, "Les implications du nouveau dans le permis (Mc 2,1 – 3,6)", *Ouvrir les Écritures. Mélanges offerts à Paul Beauchamp à l'occasion de ses soixante-dix ans* (eds. P. BOVATI – R. MEYNET) (LD 162; Paris 1995) 201-223.

³⁰ Così J.A. ZIESLER, "The Removal of the Bridegroom: A Note on Mark II.18-22 and Parallels", *NTS* 19 (1972-1973) 192; U. MELL, "«Neuer Wein (gehört) in neue Schläuche» (Mk 2,22c)", *ThZ* 52 (1996) 28-30; LÉGASSE, *Évangile*, 195; MARCUS, *Mark 1-8*, 238; FOCANT, *Évangile*, 123; J.F. MALI, *The Christian Gospel and its Jewish Roots. A Redaction-Critical Study of Mark 2:21-22 in Context* (SBLit 131; New York 2009) 100-101.

³¹ Si vedano F. HAHN, "Die Bildworte vom neuen Flicken und vom jungen Wein (Mk. 2,21f parr)", *EvT* 31 (1971) 371-372; THISSEN, *Erzählung*, 185-186.

accomunate da una lettura allegorica di questi *logia*, in cui Gesù è identificato con lo sposo, i discepoli con gli amici dello sposo e la presenza-assenza dello sposo con i tempi pre- e post-pasquale. Tuttavia, l'assenza di una «cristologia nuziale» in Marco, il significato del verbo ἀπαίρω (v. 20), mai impiegato in riferimento ad azioni violente o uccisioni né nella LXX né nel NT, e l'improbabilità che il tempo successivo alla Pasqua sia caratterizzato come tempo di tristezza e lutto rendono difficile una lettura allegorica simile ³². Una terza interpretazione, metaforico-parabolica, ci sembra la più confacente a Mc 2,18-20 ³³.

Il v. 18 funge da esposizione, presentando la situazione in cui collocare l'episodio: i farisei e i discepoli di Giovanni stanno facendo un digiuno. Nella pietà giudaica, oltre a poter esprimere lamento (cf. 1Sam 31,13; 2Sam 1,12; 3,35), desiderio di conversione (cf. 1Re 21,27; Is 58,3-10; Gl 2,12-13) o rafforzamento di una preghiera di domanda (cf. 2Sam 12,15-23; Tb 12,8; Gdt 4,9-15; Dn 9,3; 10,3), il digiuno era considerato anche una pratica mediante la quale il pio israelita preparava e affrettava l'intervento salvifico di Dio alla fine dei tempi ³⁴. Questa idea sembra qui richiamata dalla menzione dei discepoli di Giovanni: l'attività del loro Maestro (Mc 1,2-8) era stata presentata da Marco come orientata alla venuta del più forte, che avrebbe inaugurato il tempo finale con il suo battesimo in Spirito Santo. Il digiuno dei discepoli del Battista potrebbe aver assunto lo stesso significato, configurandosi come propedeutico alla venuta dei tempi ultimi. Dunque, fin dall'inizio della pericope, è posto in questione il tempo della salvezza escatologica. La domanda rivolta a Gesù (v. 18b) evidenzia una leggera differenza rispetto allo scenario descritto dal narratore al v. 18a: a digiunare non sono più i farisei, ma i loro discepoli. Quest'informazione potrebbe destare perplessità nel lettore, dal momento che, storicamente, i farisei non avevano gruppi di discepoli al loro seguito. In realtà, tale slittamento mira a creare un contrasto tra i discepoli di Giovanni e dei farisei da una parte e quelli di Gesù dall'altra (v. 18b). L'interrogativo rivolto a Gesù riguarda non il suo comportamento, ma quello dei suoi discepoli: su di essi, e non sul loro maestro, si concentreranno i versetti successivi.

³² Per una critica più dettagliata di questa lettura allegorica rimandiamo a F. FILANNINO, "Riconoscere il tempo del regno: un'interpretazione «non cristologica» di Mc 2,18-20", *EstBib* 76 (2018) 11-14.

³³ Per uno *status quaestionis* che comprende queste e altre interpretazioni di Mc 2,18-20 si vedano M. TAIT, *Jesus, The Divine Bridegroom, in Mark 2:18-22* (AnBib 185; Roma 2010) 20-27; FILANNINO, "Riconoscere", 8-10.

³⁴ Si vedano W. LANE, *The Gospel according to Mark* (NICNT; Grand Rapids, MI – Cambridge 1974) 109; MARCUS, *Mark 1-8*, 232-233; M.E. BORING, *Mark. A Commentary* (NTLi; Louisville, KY 2006) 84-85; MALI, *Gospel*, 92; TAIT, *Jesus*, 287.

La contro-domanda, con la quale Gesù risponde (v. 19a) e che presuppone una risposta negativa (cf. il μή iniziale), ricorre a una metafora attinta dalle celebrazioni nuziali di allora. I discepoli di Gesù sono assimilati agli amici di uno sposo, che avevano il compito di alimentare il clima gioioso durante la festa nuziale: essi, perciò, non potevano di certo digiunare ³⁵. In queste parole di Gesù, il digiuno assume un significato che va ben oltre quello letterale: esso diventa metafora della mortificazione e della tristezza che si oppongono diametralmente alla gioia di cui è immagine la festa nuziale. Il richiamo alla presenza dello sposo (ἐν ᾧ ὁ νυμφίος μετ' αὐτῶν), più che porre al centro questa figura, intende semplicemente affermare l'impossibilità del digiuno per gli amici dello sposo nel tempo delle nozze.

È quanto viene ribadito al v. 19b: la posizione enfatica della subordinata temporale (ὅσον χρόνον...) conferma che al centro di questi versetti c'è una questione di tempi, ai quali la condotta degli amici dello sposo deve conformarsi. La congiunzione avversativa δέ (v. 20) e il riferimento temporale in posizione enfatica (ἐλεύσονται ἡμέραι) indicano la venuta di un tempo differente, contraddistinto dall'assenza dello sposo. L'uscita di scena di quest'ultimo è spesso interpretata in modo allegorico, come un velato riferimento alla passione di Gesù, soprattutto in virtù di un possibile richiamo intertestuale al Servo del Signore in Is 53,8. Contro questa proposta, oltre al fatto che in questo passo troviamo il verbo αἶρω (e non il suo composto), è bene notare che il significato di ἀπαίρω nella LXX («partire, allontanarsi») e la mancanza di questo verbo negli annunci e nel racconto della passione impediscono di scorgervi un accenno alla morte di Gesù. Piuttosto, l'uscita di scena dello sposo è da interpretare semplicemente come la conclusione delle nozze, che implica per i suoi amici la fine dell'impossibilità di digiunare. Ancora una volta, l'attenzione è posta non tanto sullo sposo, ma sui suoi amici, ai quali lo sposo è tolto (ἀπ' αὐτῶν) ³⁶. L'accumulazione quasi ridondante di espressioni temporali (ἐλεύσονται ἡμέραι, τότε, ἐν ἐκείνῃ τῇ ἡμέρᾳ) porta alla ribalta la questione del tempo: durante le nozze, agli amici dello sposo non è possibile digiunare, mentre possono farlo al termine della festa nuziale ³⁷. Letto fuor di

³⁵ Per la funzione degli amici dello sposo nei matrimoni giudaici, si vedano MELL, "Wein", 12-13; R. ZIMMERMANN, *Geschlechtermetaphorik und Gottesverhältnis*. Traditionsgeschichte und Theologie eines Bildfelds in Urchristentum und antiker Umwelt (WUNT II/122; Tübingen 2001) 286; G. KERN, "Fasten oder feiern? — Eine Frage der Zeit (Vom Bräutigam/Die Fastenfrage). Mk 2,18-20 (Mt 9,14f./Lk 5,33-35/EvThom 104)", *Kompendium der Gleichnisse Jesu* (ed. R. ZIMMERMANN) (Gütersloh 2007) 267-268.

³⁶ Si veda DELORME, *Annonce*, I, 188.

³⁷ Circa la *crux interpretum* rappresentata da ἐν ἐκείνῃ τῇ ἡμέρᾳ (Mc 2,20), concordiamo con GUELICH, *Mark*, 113; TAIT, *Jesus*, 311-312: si tratta di un'espressione sinonima al precedente ἐλεύσονται ἡμέραι.

metafora, il *logion* di Mc 2,20 non è profezia di un tempo futuro che sarà contraddistinto da lutto e tristezza e in cui i discepoli dovranno digiunare. Ricadremmo in una lettura allegorica, che peraltro non avrebbe senso: secondo quest'interpretazione, il tempo della presenza dello sposo dovrebbe già essere il tempo escatologico; ma, se escatologico, questo tempo non può essere seguito da alcun tempo successivo, tantomeno da un tempo di tristezza. L'allontanamento dello sposo è, invece, da intendere in senso parabolico: mentre non si addice al tempo delle nozze, il digiuno è possibile, invece, al di fuori dei festeggiamenti nuziali.

Alla luce di quanto detto per il v. 18 e dello sfondo veterotestamentario dell'immaginario nuziale ³⁸, possiamo affermare che i *logia* parabolici di Mc 2,19-20 presentano i discepoli di Gesù nella stessa situazione degli amici dello sposo: essi sono chiamati a riconoscere il loro tempo e a conformare a esso la loro condotta. Ora, poiché il tempo della salvezza definitiva è già in corso (cf. Mc 1,14-15), non ha senso per loro digiunare per accelerarne la venuta, come fanno gli altri (v. 18). I discepoli di Gesù sono nel tempo del Regno, e alla gioia di questo tempo devono conformare il loro comportamento ³⁹! I *logia* successivi confermano quest'interpretazione.

2. La novità del Regno da accogliere (Mc 2,21-22)

L'assenza di qualsiasi elemento narrativo che interrompa le parole di Gesù e il carattere parabolico di questi *logia* rivelano la continuità di Mc 2,21-22 con quanto precede. Questi due detti conclusivi sono caratterizzati da un evidente parallelismo strutturale e contenutistico. In entrambi, il pronome indefinito οὐδείς è soggetto di una proposizione principale che descrive un'azione dagli effetti rovinosi, presentati mediante una proposizione condizionale, introdotta da εἰ δὲ μή e la cui apodosi è composta di due frasi coordinate tra loro mediante καί. Nei due *logia* sono stigmatizzate due azioni insensate: in tal modo il lettore può cogliere una certa continuità con i vv. 18-20, dove Gesù aveva accennato all'inopportunità del digiuno per gli amici dello sposo. Nel primo detto Gesù dichiara l'assurdità di cucire una toppa di panno nuovo (τὸ καινόν) su un vestito vecchio (ἱμάτιον παλαιόν): in questo caso, infatti, il lavaggio avrebbe provocato il restringimento della toppa, creando uno strappo peggiore nel vestito. Nel secondo *logion* Gesù nota la stoltezza di versare vino novello

³⁸ Si vedano Is 54,5-10; 62,5; Ger 2,2; Ez 16,1-63; Os 2,16-22, dove YHWH è presentato come lo sposo del tempo finale.

³⁹ Per un'esposizione più dettagliata di quest'interpretazione dei vv. 19-20 si veda FILANNINO, "Riconoscere", 18-25.

(οἶνον νέον), e perciò ancora fermentante, in otri vecchi (ἀσκοὺς παλαιούς), privi della loro originaria elasticità e destinati perciò a spaccarsi. Piuttosto, egli afferma la necessità di versare il vino nuovo (οἶνον νέον) in otri nuovi (ἀσκοὺς καινούς). Al v. 22 il lettore coglie subito l'alternanza nell'uso degli aggettivi νέος (uniche due occorrenze nel secondo vangelo) e καινός. Si può pensare a una *variatio* lessicale, voluta dall'evangelista per evitare una pedante ripetizione di uno stesso vocabolo, anche perché il parallelismo strutturale e contenutistico dei detti ai vv. 21 e 22 non consente di attribuire a νέος un significato peculiare rispetto a καινός.

A una lettura attenta, si nota come questi *logia* non intendano comunicare la superiorità di ciò che è nuovo su ciò che è vecchio, come suggeriscono le interpretazioni che abbiamo sopra richiamato. Oltre all'assenza di qualsiasi giudizio di valore sul nuovo o sull'antico ⁴⁰, entrambi i detti sembrano preoccupati dell'integrità non solo di ciò che è nuovo, ma anche di ciò che è vecchio. Nel primo caso, addirittura, la preoccupazione si concentra unicamente sul vestito vecchio, mentre nel secondo, oltre alla dispersione del vino (nuovo), si pone anche il problema della perdita degli otri vecchi. Lungi dall'affermare una prospettiva di superamento in cui la novità segna la fine di ciò che è antico, questi *logia* intendono evidenziare l'impossibilità di introdurre qualcosa di nuovo in ciò che è vecchio ⁴¹. Questo è confermato dall'affermazione conclusiva (v. 22c), che interrompe il parallelismo del *logion* di Mc 2,22 con quello precedente e, come *climax* delle parole di Gesù, ne racchiude l'insegnamento in una semplice massima: ἀλλὰ οἶνον νέον εἰς ἀσκοὺς καινούς. Introdotta dalla congiunzione ἀλλά, che indica una contrapposizione all'assurdità delle azioni presentate in precedenza, questa breve massima esorta a mettere ciò che è nuovo in qualcosa di nuovo.

Uscendo dal linguaggio parabolico, qual è il significato di Mc 2,21-22? Alla luce della suddetta interpretazione di Mc 2,18-20 e in linea con la maggioranza degli studiosi, ciò che è nuovo è da interpretare come il tempo finale, che ha fatto irruzione con Gesù e con il suo annuncio del regno di Dio (Mc 1,14-15). Perciò, i due *logia* conclusivi, come i detti parabolici di Mc 2,19-20, sono un'esortazione a riconoscere il tempo della salvezza e ad accoglierlo di conseguenza, con disposizioni nuove.

⁴⁰ Si vedano A. KEE, "The Old Coat and the New Wine: A Parable of Repentance", *NovT* 12 (1970) 18-19; GUELICH, *Mark*, 114; MALI, *Gospel*, 100.

⁴¹ Si vedano P. TRUDINGER, "The Word on the Generation Gap. Reflections on a Gospel Metaphor", *BTB* 5 (1975) 312; C. KANJIROKOMPIL, "New Wine into Fresh Wine Skins. An Exegetical Study on Mk 2:21-22", *BiBh* 23 (1997) 248-249; M. LEUTZSCH, "Was passt und was nicht (Vom alten Mantel und vom neuen Wein). Mk 2,21f. (Mt 9,16f./Lk 5,36-39/EvThom 47,3-5)", *Kompendium* (ed. ZIMMERMANN) 276.

Chi si oppone a Gesù e al Regno da lui predicato si comporta come gli amici dello sposo che digiunano durante la festa nuziale, o come chi rammenta con una toppa di panno nuovo un vestito vecchio, o come chi versa vino nuovo in otri vecchi. È l'atteggiamento di scribi e farisei nelle controversie galilaiche (Mc 2,1 – 3,6): essi non riconoscono nel perdono dei peccati (Mc 2,1-12), nella vicinanza di Gesù ai peccatori (Mc 2,13-17) e nella liberazione dell'uomo da ogni formalismo religioso (Mc 2,23-27) e male (Mc 3,1-6) i segni della presenza del Regno ⁴². In tal senso, Mc 2,18-22 costituisce la chiave interpretativa della sezione di Mc 2,1 – 3,6.

Concordiamo dunque con gli autori che connettono questi *logia* all'esortazione iniziale alla conversione e alla fede come disposizioni per accogliere il regno di Dio (Mc 1,15). Sono queste le disposizioni «nuove» con le quali accogliere la novità del regno di Dio ⁴³.

III. «IN MODO NUOVO NEL REGNO DI DIO!» (Mc 14,25)

L'aggettivo *καὶνός* ricorre per l'ultima volta in Mc 14,25, un versetto di difficile interpretazione. Gli studi storico-critici hanno percepito una tensione tra questo *logion* e le precedenti parole di Gesù (v. 24). Alcuni hanno ipotizzato che in Mc 14,25 vi siano le più antiche parole interpretative di Gesù sul calice, reputando il v. 24 un'aggiunta successiva ⁴⁴. Altri, invece, hanno visto nel v. 25 un intervento secondario della redazione marciiana ⁴⁵.

Non sono mancate, tuttavia, proposte interpretative condotte a partire dal testo finale a nostra disposizione. J. Jeremias scorge qui una dichiarazione di digiuno, che esprimerebbe una triplice volontà di Gesù: mostrare l'irrevocabilità della sua scelta di andare incontro alla morte, accelerare la venuta del Regno e intercedere per l'Israele incredulo ⁴⁶. Le numerose critiche ricevute denotano la debolezza della posizione dell'eminente studioso tedesco. Anzitutto, essa dà per scontato che Gesù abbia digiunato nel corso dell'ultima cena, il che è tutt'altro che evidente nei testi del NT (e in Marco in particolare). In secondo luogo, la pratica di un digiuno pasquale come intercessione per Israele è attestata in Asia Minore solo

⁴² Si veda FILANNINO, "Riconoscere", 30.

⁴³ Così KEE, "Coat", 21; FOCANT, *Évangile*, 122; YARBRO COLLINS, *Mark*, 200.

⁴⁴ Si vedano S. DOCKX, "Le récit du repas pascal. Marc 14,17-26", *Bib* 46 (1965) 451; J.-M. VAN CANGH, "Le déroulement primitif de la Cène (Mc 14,18-26 et par.)", *RB* 102 (1995) 209-211.

⁴⁵ Si veda L. SCHENKE, *Studien zur Passionsgeschichte des Markus 14,1-42*. Tradition und Redaktion in Markus 14,1-42 (FB 4; Würzburg 1971) 290-302.

⁴⁶ J. JEREMIAS, *Le parole dell'ultima cena* (BCR[B] 23; Brescia 1973) 268-271.

in epoca successiva: di essa non si ha traccia nel NT e, perciò, non può essere retroproiettata nella vita di Gesù ⁴⁷.

Altrettanto fragile è la posizione di quanti hanno scorto nell'astensione dal vino, menzionata in Mc 14,25, un voto di nazireato, in connessione soprattutto con il testo di Nm 6,3-4: con tale voto Gesù si consacrerebbe a Dio in vista della sua morte imminente ⁴⁸. Si deve notare che nel secondo vangelo Gesù è consacrato dallo Spirito di Dio fin dal battesimo al Giordano (Mc 1,9-11), che costituisce l'inizio della sua missione. Questa considerazione, insieme all'assenza di altri punti di contatto tra il voto di nazireato e il *logion* di Mc 14,25, esclude tale ipotesi.

In modo concorde alla maggioranza degli studiosi riteniamo che Mc 14,25 sia un richiamo di Gesù alla sua morte prossima, posta nell'orizzonte salvifico del regno di Dio. In tal modo, il *logion* di Mc 14,25 è coerente con il contesto della pericope (Mc 14,22-25), nella quale funge da *climax* del racconto della cena pasquale che Gesù vive la sera prima della sua morte. Sebbene la natura dell'ultima cena (se pasquale o meno) sia dibattuta sul piano storico (soprattutto alla luce della differente cronologia giovannea), Marco e gli altri Sinottici sottolineano il carattere pasquale di questo ultimo pasto che Gesù condivise insieme ai suoi discepoli (cf. Mc 14,12-16). È in questo senso che essa andrà dunque interpretata.

1. Un'interpretazione della morte di Gesù (Mc 14,22-24)

Già l'annuncio del tradimento, con il quale si apre il racconto della cena (Mc 14,17-21), proietta sulla nostra pericope l'idea della morte imminente di Gesù ⁴⁹. Le parole successive di Gesù, che interpretano le azioni da lui compiute sul pane e sul calice, confermano tale prospettiva: esse forniscono al lettore un'interpretazione *ante eventum* della morte di Gesù ⁵⁰.

⁴⁷ Per queste e altre obiezioni si vedano P. LEBEAU, *Le vin nouveau du royaume. Étude exégétique et patristique sur la Parole eschatologique de Jésus à la Cène* (Paris – Bruges 1966) 79-81; J. SCHLOSSER, *Le règne de Dieu dans les dits de Jésus* (EtB; Paris 1980) 391; H.F. BAYER, *Jesus' Predictions of Vindication and Resurrection. The Provenance, Meaning and Correlation of the Synoptic Predictions* (WUNT II/20; Tübingen 1986) 42-44.

⁴⁸ Così LEBEAU, *Vin*, 81-82; M. WOJCIECHOWSKI, "Le naziréat et la Passion (Mc 14,25a; 15,23)", *Bib* 65 (1984) 94-96; R.D. AUS, "Jesus as a Nazirite in Mark 14:25par., and Joseph's Reunion Meal in Judaic Tradition", *Searching the Scriptures. Studies in Context and Intertextuality* (eds. C.A. EVANS – J.J. JOHNSTON) (LNTS 543; London – New York 2015) 81-127.

⁴⁹ Così J. MARCUS, *Mark 8–16. A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (AB 27/A; New Haven, CT – London 2009) 964.

⁵⁰ Si vedano J. DUPONT, "«Ceci est mon corps», «ceci est mon sang»", *NRT* 80 (1958) 1033-1034; JEREMIAS, *Parole*, 279; YARBRO COLLINS, *Mark*, 656; DELORME, *Annonce*, II, 457.

Gesù compie le azioni che, nel corso di un pasto giudaico (e della cena pasquale), spettavano al capofamiglia: egli prende il pane, lo benedice, lo spezza e lo distribuisce ai convitati. Nell'ambito del banchetto di Pasqua è probabile che le azioni e le parole di Gesù sul pane (v. 22) abbiano luogo all'inizio del pasto principale, introdotto dalla benedizione del pane azzimo e posto subito dopo l'antipasto, qui sottinteso dal genitivo assoluto ἐσθιόντων αὐτῶν (v. 22). Ricevendo il pane spezzato e distribuito, i commensali si univano alla benedizione invocata su quel pane, stabilendo così una comunione fra loro. Le parole successive definiscono il significato che Gesù attribuisce alle sue azioni sul pane, messo da lui in relazione con il suo corpo. Come ritiene la maggioranza degli studiosi, il termine σῶμα (corrispondente all'aramaico *gûpā*) non indica soltanto la componente corporale dell'essere umano, ma la totalità della persona. Ora, sebbene le parole marciiane sul pane non siano seguite da alcuna interpretazione soteriologica, è possibile intravedere già in esse un implicito riferimento alla morte di Gesù, per tre ragioni. Anzitutto, il contesto di morte che caratterizza la pericope fa pensare al dono di sé che Gesù farà di lì a poco⁵¹. In secondo luogo, negli altri riferimenti marciiani al σῶμα di Gesù, questo termine indica il corpo di Gesù in vista della sepoltura (Mc 14,8; 15,43). Con questo non s'intende affermare che il pane della cena è qui identificato con il cadavere di Gesù, ma è evidente che vi sia un'allusione alla sua morte⁵². Infine, il parallelismo di questo detto con le successive parole sul calice, dove invece il richiamo alla morte è esplicito, conferma questo dato. Si può concludere che «le mot 'corps' désigne la personne de Jésus sous l'angle de ce qui va lui advenir comme corps livré à la mort»⁵³. Nella condivisione di questo pane, enfaticizzata dall'imperativo λάβετε (sorprendente, se si pensa che durante un pasto giudaico la distribuzione del pane avveniva in silenzio), i convitati partecipano al dono implicato dall'auto-donazione di Gesù⁵⁴.

In stretto parallelismo sono presentate le azioni e le parole di Gesù sul calice. Nell'ambito della cena pasquale è probabile si tratti del terzo dei quattro calici previsti, detto «calice della benedizione» (cf. 1Cor 10,16),

⁵¹ Si veda U. SOMMER, *Die Passionsgeschichte des Markusevangeliums*. Überlegungen zur Bedeutung der Geschichte für den Glauben (WUNT II/58; Tübingen 1993) 81.

⁵² Si veda X. LÉON-DUFOUR, *Le partage du pain eucharistique selon le Nouveau Testament* (Paris 1982) 231.

⁵³ FOCANT, *Évangile*, 526. Si veda anche G. OSSOM-BATSA, *The Institution of the Eucharist in the Gospel of Mark*. A Study of the Function of Mark 14,22-25 within the Gospel Narrative (Bern 2001) 118.

⁵⁴ Così K. KERTELGE, "Das Abendmahl Jesu im Markusevangelium", *Begegnung mit dem Wort*. Festschrift für Heinrich Zimmermann (eds. J. ZMIJEWSKI – E. NELLESSEN) (BBB 53; Bonn 1980) 74-75; O. HOFIUS, "'Für euch gegeben zur Vergebung der Sünden'. Vom Sinn des Heiligen Abendmahls", *ZTK* 95 (1998) 328-329.

che era bevuto dopo il pasto principale. Gesù prende il calice, rende grazie e lo distribuisce ai presenti. L'annotazione che tutti bevono da questo calice è singolare sia perché di solito, nei pasti giudaici, ogni commensale beveva dal proprio calice, sia perché quest'informazione è posta prima delle parole interpretative di Gesù. Probabilmente essa vuole rimarcare la comunione dei commensali fra loro e con Gesù ⁵⁵. Al v. 24 Gesù definisce il significato del vino, mettendolo in relazione con il suo sangue. Il significato di queste parole è imprescindibile dal loro sfondo anticotestamentario. L'espressione τὸ αἶμα τῆς διαθήκης richiama in modo inequivocabile l'affermazione con cui Mosè aveva dichiarato l'antica alleanza (Es 24,8), stabilita presso il Sinai mediante l'aspersione del sangue di animali (Es 24,3-8). Il contesto pasquale della cena corrobora questo riferimento intertestuale. Come l'antica alleanza, culmine della liberazione dalla schiavitù d'Egitto, era stata ratificata nel sangue, così ora il sangue di Gesù fonda un'alleanza nuova, qui implicata, sebbene non si parli espressamente di «nuova alleanza» ⁵⁶. Posta in relazione con i sacrifici antichi, la morte di Gesù è connotata come un sacrificio di alleanza ⁵⁷.

La successiva precisazione (τὸ ἐκχυννόμενον ὑπὲρ πολλῶν) sottende significati ulteriori. L'espressione ἐκχέω αἶμα («versare il sangue») è utilizzata, tanto nella LXX quanto nel NT, per esprimere l'uccisione violenta di un uomo ⁵⁸; in altri casi, essa fa riferimento al sangue di animali sacrificati ⁵⁹. Con quest'espressione Gesù ribadisce il carattere sacrificale della sua morte, caratterizzando quest'ultima come violenta e imminente (il participio presente ἐκχυννόμενον esprime un futuro prossimo). Il sintagma finale (ὑπὲρ πολλῶν) configura la morte di Gesù come espiazione vicaria a vantaggio di «molti», da intendere qui in senso inclusivo (secondo il significato del corrispondente termine ebraico *rabbîm*). Con grande probabilità, quest'espressione costituisce un'allusione alla figura del Servo del Signore (Is 52,13 – 53,12), la cui sofferenza e morte sono

⁵⁵ In questo senso tale annotazione è talora considerata in parallelo con il precedente λάβετε: si vedano SCHENKE, *Studien*, 327; OSSOM-BATSA, *Institution*, 92-93.

⁵⁶ Alcuni testimoni testuali aggiungono l'aggettivo καινῆς al v. 24. Si tratta di un'aggiunta secondaria, sia per ragioni di critica esterna (è attestato in manoscritti di minore rilevanza) sia perché costituisce una spiegazione del testo (*lectio facilior*) dovuta probabilmente all'influenza di Lc 22,20 e 1Cor 11,25.

⁵⁷ Così DUPONT, "Ceci", 1034-1035; F. HAHN, "Die alttestamentliche Motive in der urchristlichen Abendmahlsüberlieferung", *EvT* 27 (1967) 362; SCHENKE, *Studien*, 329; H. MERKLEIN, "Erwägungen zur Überlieferungsgeschichte der neutestamentlichen Abendmahlstraditionen", *BZ* 21 (1977) 92; N.W. DURAN, *The Power of Disorder. Ritual Elements in Mark's Passion Narrative* (LNTS 378; London – New York 2008) 65-66.

⁵⁸ Si vedano Gen 9,6; 37,22; Nm 35,33; Dt 19,10; 21,7; 2Re 21,16; 24,4; 1Cr 22,8; 28,3; 1Mac 1,37; 7,17; 2Mac 1,8; Sal 78,3.10; 105,38 (LXX); Pr 1,16; Ger 7,6; Lam 4,13; Ez 18,10; 22,3.4.6.9.12.27; Sof 1,17; Mt 23,35; Lc 11,50; At 22,20; Rm 3,15; Ap 16,6.

⁵⁹ Si vedano Es 29,12; Lv 4,7.18.25.30.34; 8,15; 9,9.

a vantaggio dei πολλοί (Is 52,14.15; 53,11.12). D'altronde, il valore espiatorio della sua morte era già stato dichiarato da Gesù in Mc 10,45, che, insieme a Mc 14,24, è la più importante affermazione soteriologica del secondo vangelo ⁶⁰. Inoltre, quando nel NT si menziona il sangue di Gesù, è spesso implicata la sua morte espiatrice ⁶¹.

Bevendo al calice offerto loro da Gesù, i convitati sono inclusi in quell'alleanza che Gesù sta per sigillare con la sua morte, nella quale egli realizzerà la remissione dei peccati promessa come frutto della nuova alleanza (Ger 31,31-34 LXX). In definitiva, posti in stretto parallelismo, i detti di Gesù sul pane e sul calice, che interpretano le corrispettive azioni, intendono esprimere il significato salvifico della sua morte prossima. In questo contesto va letto il versetto conclusivo (Mc 14,25).

2. *La novità del Regno escatologico (Mc 14,25)*

La formula ἀμὴν λέγω ὑμῖν e l'uso della triplice negazione (οὐκέτι οὐ μὴ) conferiscono enfasi a quanto Gesù sta per pronunciare. Alla luce del significato dei versetti precedenti è inevitabile che, quando Gesù dichiara che non berrà più del frutto della vite, il lettore interpreti quest'affermazione come un riferimento alla sua morte imminente. La scelta di quest'espressione per alludere alla sua fine prossima è dettata probabilmente dal contesto del pasto e dal precedente riferimento al calice del vino, oltre che dal successivo richiamo all'immagine del banchetto escatologico ⁶².

Il *logion* di Gesù non si esaurisce con questa profezia di morte. La seconda parte del detto apre una prospettiva nuova, alludendo a un tempo in cui Gesù berrà del frutto della vite nel regno di Dio. Il termine καινόν, che ritroviamo in quest'affermazione, pone interrogativi anzitutto sul piano grammaticale, perché può essere inteso in senso aggettivale o avverbiale. Nel primo caso, esso fungerebbe da attributo di αὐτό, pronome riferito al «frutto della vite»: Gesù starebbe alludendo a un vino nuovo, che egli avrebbe bevuto nel regno di Dio. Nel secondo, come spesso

⁶⁰ Si veda A. WEIHS, *Die Deutung des Todes Jesu im Markusevangelium*. Eine exegetische Studie zu den Leidens- und Auferstehungsansagen (FB 99; Würzburg 2003) 499.

⁶¹ Si vedano At 20,28; Rm 3,25; 5,9; Ef 1,7; 2,13; Col 1,20; Eb 9,12.14; 10,29; 12,24; 13,12.20; 1Pt 1,2.19; 1Gv 1,7; Ap 1,5; 5,9; 7,14; 12,11.

⁶² Così anche P.-B. SMIT, *Fellowship and Food in the Kingdom*. Eschatological Meals and Scenes of Utopian Abundance in the New Testament (WUNT II/234; Tübingen 2008) 107. R. VIGNOLO, "Oltre la sua morte. A proposito di Mc 14,25 e par. (Mt 26,29; Lc 22,14-20)", *The Gospels: History and Christology*. The Search of Joseph Ratzinger-Benedict XVI (eds. B. ESTRADA – E. MANICARDI – A. PUIG I TÀRRECH) (Città del Vaticano 2013) 591, scrive che qui Gesù «si autoesclude dal frutto della vite — e cioè da ogni situazione conviviale festiva quale cifra della stessa vita».

avviene per gli aggettivi utilizzati all'accusativo neutro, *καίνόν* intenderebbe un modo nuovo in cui Gesù avrebbe bevuto il vino nel Regno. In un suo contributo (che condividiamo e al quale rimandiamo) P.-B. Smit ha avanzato una serie di argomenti a favore di quest'ultima interpretazione: Gesù non intende stabilire una contrapposizione tra due tipi di vino (presente e futuro), bensì alludere a un bere rinnovato ⁶³.

La novità qui intesa non è certamente una semplice ripresa temporale, come se Gesù dovesse tornare *di nuovo* a bere vino: in tal caso, Marco avrebbe utilizzato l'avverbio *πάλιν*, tipico del suo vocabolario. Piuttosto, Gesù si riferisce a una novità qualitativa, associata alla realtà richiamata subito dopo: il regno di Dio. Ultimo detto di Gesù sul Regno, il *logion* di Mc 14,25 si avvicina a quello di Mc 9,1 sia per la sua forma (*ἀμὴν λέγω ὑμῖν* + duplice negazione) sia per il richiamo al regno di Dio venturo (sono gli unici due detti marcani sul Regno come realtà futura). Ora, sebbene sia una *crux interpretum* fra gli studiosi del secondo vangelo, è molto probabile che in Mc 9,1 Gesù stia alludendo al compimento escatologico. L'accostamento con Mc 8,38, dove per la venuta del Figlio dell'uomo è impiegato lo stesso verbo (*ἐρχομαι*) che in Mc 9,1 si riferisce alla venuta del regno di Dio, e la presenza del termine *δύναμις*, di solito associato alla parusia del Figlio dell'uomo (Mc 13,26; 14,62), vanno in questa direzione. Possiamo dunque presupporre lo stesso richiamo al compimento escatologico in Mc 14,25. Tale interpretazione è suffragata da altre due considerazioni. In primo luogo, l'immagine del banchetto, qui sottesa dalle parole di Gesù, è talora impiegata nella tradizione giudaica e nel NT in riferimento ai tempi ultimi ⁶⁴. Inoltre, alla luce del contesto pasquale della cena in Marco, si deve rammentare che la Pasqua giudaica non era soltanto una commemorazione della salvezza passata operata da Dio, ma anche un'anticipazione della futura salvezza messianica ⁶⁵.

Con quest'affermazione Gesù intende chiarire due punti nell'imminenza della sua morte. Anzitutto, riguardo alla sua persona, egli ribadisce (come già in Mc 8,31; 9,31; 10,33-34) che la morte non è la parola ultima sul suo destino. Piuttosto, essa è inserita nell'orizzonte di quella gloria futura alla quale il Figlio dell'uomo perverrà mediante la sua passione, morte e resurrezione ⁶⁶. In secondo luogo, Gesù ricorda che il regno

⁶³ P.-B. SMIT, "Neuer Wein oder Wein aufs Neue - Eine Notiz zu Mk 14,25", *BN* 129 (2006) 61-70.

⁶⁴ Si vedano Is 25,6-9; 65,13-14; 1En 62,14; 2Ba 29,5-8; 1QSa 2,11-22; Mt 8,11; Lc 13,28-29; 14,15; 22,29-30; Ap 19,9.

⁶⁵ Si vedano LEBEAU, *Vin*, 41-43; JEREMIAS, *Parole*, 255-257; LÉON-DUFOUR, *Partage*, 222-227; MARCUS, *Mark 8-16*, 968.

⁶⁶ Così A. AMBROZIC, *The Hidden Kingdom. A Redactional-Critical Study of the References to the Kingdom of God in Mark's Gospel* (CBQMS 2; Washington, DC 1972)

di Dio, approssimatosi con lui e contenuto centrale della sua predicazione (Mc 1,14-15), non terminerà con la sua morte, ma troverà definitiva realizzazione nel compimento finale, sempre in stretta relazione con la sua persona. La partecipazione alla morte salvifica di Gesù, che i discepoli realizzano ora nei segni del pane e del vino, diventa presupposto e speranza della condivisione della medesima gloria cui va incontro il loro Maestro ⁶⁷.

IV. LA NOVITÀ DEL REGNO DI DIO IN MARCO

Dall'analisi delle occorrenze dell'aggettivo *καινός*, considerate nel loro contesto, emerge in modo costante la connessione tra questo termine e la nozione di regno di Dio. In particolare, ciascuna delle occorrenze di *καινός* si riferisce a uno dei tre momenti in cui, secondo Marco, si dispiega il regno di Dio: il suo approssimarsi, la sua crescita e il suo compimento.

Nel suo annuncio programmatico (Mc 1,14-15) Gesù proclama l'approssimarsi del regno di Dio, che fa irruzione nella storia con la sua persona e missione. Senza entrare nel merito dell'annosa controversia che, nel secolo scorso, ha contrapposto i sostenitori di un'«escatologia realizzata» a quelli di un'«escatologia futura», si può affermare che il verbo *ἐγγίζω* (Mc 1,15) implichi già un'effettiva presenza del Regno, sebbene in tensione verso il suo compimento definitivo ⁶⁸. L'esorcismo nella sinagoga di Cafarnao (1,21-28), strategicamente narrato come primo atto del ministero pubblico di Gesù, è presentato da Marco come segno evidente di quest'irruzione del Regno. Perciò, nel riconoscimento della novità dell'insegnamento autorevole di Gesù, posto dopo l'esorcismo, i presenti nella sinagoga intuiscono nell'agire di Gesù (senza definirlo con precisione) il *novum* del regno di Dio approssimatosi.

Nelle parabole del seme che cresce spontaneamente (Mc 4,26-29) e del granello di senape (Mc 4,30-32), inglobate nel grande insegnamento parabolico sul regno di Dio (Mc 4,1-34), Gesù insiste sul secondo momento del Regno: la sua crescita. Nella prima parabola l'accento non è posto né sulla semina né sulla mietitura, ma sullo sviluppo del seme, descritto nelle sue varie fasi. Nella seconda Gesù focalizza il contrasto tra la piccolezza del seme e la grandezza finale della pianta di senape, enfatizzandone la

200-201; R. PESCH, *Das Markusevangelium* (HThKNT 2; Freiburg – Basel – Wien ²1977-1980) II, 360-361; SCHLOSSER, *Règne*, 394-395; LÉON-DUFOUR, *Partage*, 233; BORING, *Mark*, 392; MARCUS, *Mark 8-16*, 968.

⁶⁷ Si veda DUPONT, “«Ceci»”, 1041.

⁶⁸ Si vedano KINGSBURY, *Christology*, 73; GRUNDMANN, *Evangelium*, 50; GUELICH, *Mark*, 44.

crescita ⁶⁹. Questo sviluppo del Regno avviene mediante la sua accoglienza, che deve esprimersi nella conversione e nella fede (Mc 1,15). È proprio questo il significato dei *logia* parabolici di Mc 2,21-22, in cui ritroviamo altre due occorrenze dell'aggettivo καινός! Il vino nuovo in otri nuovi è l'immagine del discepolo di Gesù chiamato ad accogliere la novità del Regno con disposizioni nuove.

Infine, i passi di Mc 9,1; 14,25 evidenziano che il Regno è una realtà che troverà la sua definitiva realizzazione alla fine dei tempi. Predicando che egli berrà il frutto della vite in maniera nuova nel regno di Dio (Mc 14,25), Gesù allude alla novità che caratterizzerà questo compimento finale. Nell'*eschaton* egli non sarà più il Figlio dell'uomo umiliato e sofferente (Mc 8,31; 9,9.12.31; 10,33.45; 14,21.41), ma glorioso e potente (Mc 8,38 – 9,1; 13,26; 14,62). Legato alla persona di Gesù, il «mistero del regno di Dio» (Mc 4,11) si manifesterà non più in modo velato, ma nella sua piena evidenza ⁷⁰.

In conclusione, possiamo affermare che, in maniera coerente al suo uso neotestamentario, anche in Mc l'aggettivo καινός denota la novità escatologica. In particolare, è possibile associare questo termine a quella nozione che sta al centro dell'escatologia marciiana e che fu il cuore della predicazione di Gesù: il regno di Dio.

Pontificia Università Lateranense
Piazza S. Giovanni in Laterano, 4
I-00184 Roma

Francesco FILANNINO

SUMMARY

The paper intends to clarify the meaning of the adjective καινός in the Gospel of Mark. The analysis of the pericopes where this term is present (Mk 1,21-28; 2,18-22; 14,22-25) aims at highlighting its meaning in these narrative contexts. It shows that Mark links the adjective καινός to the notion of "kingdom of God", in particular to the three moments of it: approach (Mk 1,15), growth (Mk 4,26-32) and final fulfilment (Mk 9,1; 14,25).

⁶⁹ Per il significato di queste parabole è insuperato lo studio di V. FUSCO, *Parola e Regno*. La sezione delle parabole (Mc 4,1-34) nella prospettiva marciiana (Brescia 1980) 341-380.

⁷⁰ La stessa parabola del seme che cresce spontaneamente (Mc 4,26-29) sottende questi tre momenti del Regno: 1) la semina (avvicinarsi del Regno nella predicazione di Gesù: cf. Mc 4,3-9); 2) la crescita; 3) la mietitura (tipica immagine apocalittica per il compimento finale).

POUR EN FINIR AVEC LE PLAN DES ACTES — LA SAMARIE: UNE QUESTION D'HISTORIOGRAPHIE THÉOLOGIQUE

Il est étonnant que la juste et déjà ancienne intuition de Philippe Menoud¹ sur le plan du livre des Actes des Apôtres n'ait pas connu des suites plus rigoureuses. Elle a eu un triple mérite. D'abord, Menoud a fait craquer la bipartition, habituelle jusque-là, de la structure des Actes. Ensuite, il a repéré la dimension programmatique de l'envoi des disciples par Jésus juste avant l'Ascension: «Vous serez mes témoins à Jérusalem, et dans toute la Judée et Samarie, et jusqu'aux confins de la Terre». Enfin, Menoud a repéré que, concomitamment à la progression géographique, «la mission gagne sur le plan théologique»². Cette triple avancée a été unanimement reconnue par les exégètes et a servi de fondements à beaucoup³ pour proposer un plan à la fois géographique et théologique. La plupart après Ménoud ont vu que le récit, en suivant l'expansion de l'évangile jusqu'à Rome, déploie une problématique d'universalisation de la Parole. Pourtant, peu ont su faire une proposition satisfaisante quant à la structure des Actes des Apôtres, notamment parce qu'ils n'ont pas su rendre compte de la mention de «la Judée et Samarie» en Ac 1,8.

Nous voudrions reprendre ici la question à frais nouveaux car elle sous-tend véritablement la compréhension de l'historiographie théologique de l'œuvre. Il ne s'agit pas d'exhumer simplement un plan mais bien de découvrir ce qui sous-tend l'historiographie de Luc, et par suite la signification théologique du projet lucanien.

I. DANS TOUTE LA JUDÉE ET SAMARIE

1. Repérer l'annonce d'un plan en trois parties

L'une des avancées de Menoud, confirmée par l'approche narrative, consiste à considérer que le plan des Actes se situe bien dans les instructions

¹ P.H. MENOUD, «Le plan des Actes des apôtres», *NTS* 1 (1954-1955) 44-51.

² P.H. MENOUD, «Le plan des Actes», 46.

³ Il serait laborieux de les citer ici, mais, en langue française, on peut citer deux auteurs reconnus. D'une part, Jacques Dupont, qui reprend à bon escient le principe de l'entrelacement chez Lucien de Samosate pour proposer quatre parties (J. DUPONT, *Nouvelles Études sur les Actes des Apôtres* [LeDiv 118; Paris 1984] 24-36). D'autre part, Daniel Marguerat, dans son commentaire récent, propose un prologue et cinq parties: D. MARGUERAT, *Les Actes des Apôtres (1-12)* (Genève 2007) 20-22.

de Jésus, en Ac 1,8. Depuis le premier tome de l'œuvre lucanienne, et l'on peut même remonter à Marc, on voit que le narrateur cède souvent à tel ou tel personnage, en l'occurrence à son protagoniste, des informations structurantes pour le récit. C'est Jésus qui instaure la typologie prophétique en Luc 4. C'est un disciple d'Emmaüs qui résume le parcours du Christ en Luc 24. Ici, c'est encore Jésus qui annonce le plan des Actes des Apôtres ⁴.

Peu d'auteurs ont repéré que la phrase de Jésus n'était pas simplement un mouvement allant de Jérusalem aux extrémités du monde, ou bien encore une quadripartition, au prétexte qu'il y a quatre repères géographiques (Jérusalem, la Judée, la Samarie et les confins de la terre). Il s'agit bien d'une tripartition. La lecture oblige à garder ensemble, comme une seule entité, *toute la Judée et Samarie*. Plusieurs éléments le confirment. Tout d'abord, l'agencement de la phrase :

ἐν τε Ἱερουσαλὴμ καὶ [ἐν] πάσῃ τῇ Ἰουδαίᾳ καὶ Σαμαρείᾳ καὶ ἕως ἑσχάτου τῆς γῆς

Cela induit le traitement unifié de la «Judée et Samarie» : l'absence d'article à Σαμαρείᾳ, le *πάσῃ* commun, et enfin le ἐν ⁵ commun, qui complète les deux autres prépositions spatiales (ἐν pour Jérusalem et ἕως pour les confins). Cette unité, «Judée et Samarie», est à la base de la théologie Lucanienne des Actes, nous le démontrerons.

Cette intuition est confirmée par trois autres constats. D'abord, Luc reprend quasiment la même formule en 8,1 : κατὰ τὰς χώρας τῆς Ἰουδαίας καὶ Σαμαρείας. Gageons que Luc signale ici le début de la deuxième partie annoncée en 1,8, sa partie sur «Judée et Samarie». Ensuite, il est difficile dans le récit de trouver une partie qui ne concernerait que la Judée, puisque les événements glissent directement de Jérusalem (Actes 7) à la Samarie (Actes 8). Judée et Samarie sont reliées ici pour une raison autre que géographique. Enfin, l'idée que Luc insère une partie entre *Jérusalem* — plutôt dédiée à Pierre — et *les extrémités de la terre* — dédiés à Paul — est cohérente avec l'organisation que l'auteur avait déjà proposée dans son premier tome : augmentant le plan biparti de Marc, il avait inséré une section intermédiaire consistante, la montée vers Jérusalem (9,51 – 19,27), entre le ministère en Galilée et l'arrivée à Jérusalem. Cette section intermédiaire, présentant le prophète rejeté, constituait la charnière nécessaire pour articuler les deux autres parties. Au demeurant, c'est dans cette section

⁴ Ce fait narratif n'est pas sans conséquence théologique sur la christologie des Actes des Apôtres mais déborde le thème de notre étude.

⁵ Il nous semble qu'il faut garder le ἐν, comme le proposent quelques manuscrits solides. Si la critique a des difficultés à discerner, nous pensons qu'ici la répétition du ἐν, très sémitique, aurait pu être effacée par des copistes pour des questions de style.

intermédiaire que se situait déjà la problématique samaritaine, avec ses impacts sur la question de l'unité du peuple et de l'universalité de l'évangile. Nous y reviendrons.

Nous maintenons donc qu'en toute rigueur, il faut repérer le plan triparti des Actes parce que c'est ainsi que le narrateur le conçoit. Avant d'aller plus loin, il est bon de ne jamais oublier que Luc conjugue toujours plusieurs types de composition. À côté de la structuration par la géographie, l'historiographie ou la théologie, il a habitué son lecteur, dès Luc 1–2, à une composition s'appuyant sur la technique de la *synkrisis*. Or, en Actes, un critère majeur de composition consiste dans la *synkrisis* entre Pierre et Paul, s'appuyant elle-même sur une *synkrisis* entre les deux apôtres et Jésus. Fort de cette conception, Jean-Noël Aletti montre la dimension structurante du parallèle entre Pierre (Actes 1–12) et Paul (Actes 13–28) ⁶. Selon ce parallélisme entre les deux apôtres, on pourrait repérer un plan du livre en deux parties. Il faudra rendre compte de la compatibilité de notre proposition en trois parties avec la *synkrisis* entre Pierre et Paul.

Un certain nombre d'auteurs ont perçu qu'Actes, comme Luc, comportait trois parties. Mais il y a toujours eu une réelle difficulté à reconnaître les pôles de cette structure, et particulièrement ceux de la partie intermédiaire. En effet, gênés par le fait que la Samarie ne recouvre qu'une partie du chapitre 8, des auteurs vont réduire grandement l'extension deuxième partie ⁷. Quant à nous, nous affirmons que la deuxième partie des Actes, nommée «toute la Judée et Samarie», est incluse entre 8,1 et 15,33 et nous allons en démontrer la pertinence dans l'historiographie théologique des Actes.

À ce point de notre réflexion, plusieurs questions se posent. Pourquoi la dispersion en Judée et Samarie d'Ac 8,1 est-elle le début d'une partie? Pourquoi une telle insistance sur l'association de ces deux régions dans le propos de Jésus? Pourquoi alors Luc ne passe-t-il que vingt-cinq versets en Samarie? Que s'est-il vraiment passé en Samarie? Qu'est ce qui permet de délimiter la fin cette deuxième partie en 15,33, alors que le récit se déroule dès 8,26 entre Gaza, Damas, Joppé et la Pisidie, c'est-à-dire bien au-delà de la Samarie? Quant aux passages en Judée, ils se résument surtout à Jérusalem, en Actes 12 pour la délivrance de Pierre et en Actes 15 pour le Concile. Pourquoi? Pourquoi ne pas estimer qu'une première partie s'achève en Actes 12 avec la sortie de Pierre et qu'une seconde

⁶ J.-N. ALETTI, *Quand Luc raconte* (Lire la Bible 114; Paris 1998) 75-93.

⁷ Par exemple, J. HAMAIDE – P. GUILBERT, «Résonnances pastorales du plan des Actes des Apôtres», *Église vivante* 9 (1957) 380-382. Ils achèvent la partie samaritaine en 9,31, au prétexte que Judée et Samarie y sont encore cités ensemble. Cela qui constitue une côte bien mal taillée et ne tient pas compte de la mention de la Samarie en 15,3.

commence en Actes 13 avec la première mission de Paul? En fin de compte, ne force-t-on pas le récit en voulant le contraindre à entrer dans une structure qui paraît tout sauf claire au centre des Actes des Apôtres? Et si structure il y a, en quoi aide-t-elle à l'interprétation des Actes? Nous ne laisserons de côté aucune de ces questions et nous allons nous atteler au dossier avec rigueur.

2. *La dispersion en Judée-Samarie (8,1): une charnière dans le récit*

Avant de lancer l'enquête, il faut s'accorder sur un constat. L'annonce du plan dans la bouche de Jésus en Ac 1,8 n'est pas un simple effet de manche: la question Judée/Samarie est capitale pour Luc. La terminologie, nous l'avons vu, revient de façon claire en 8,1: «Tous, à l'exception des apôtres, se dispersèrent dans les campagnes de Judée et de Samarie». La Samarie est à nouveau associée à la Judée et ce, à un moment charnière: le récit quitte pour la première fois Jérusalem. Regardons d'abord ce qui précède ce verset, c'est-à-dire l'épisode d'Étienne. Trois éléments y préparent un changement de cadre: d'abord dans son discours, le diacre prend une distance par rapport à une conception trop locale du Temple. Ensuite, son martyre achève un cycle hiérosolymite où l'Église naissante a connu croissance et communion, mais aussi divisions et persécutions. Enfin, c'est ici, en 8,1⁸, que pour la première fois apparaît le terme διασπείρω (disperser), dont l'usage est déjà attesté depuis la Lxx en Ézéchiel pour évoquer la *Diaspora*.

Regardons également ce qui suit le verset 8,1. Les épisodes subséquents attestent la dispersion. D'abord, le second usage de διασπείρω (en 8,4) introduit directement le départ de Philippe pour une ville de Samarie, voire mieux pour la ville de Samarie⁹. Ensuite l'épisode de l'eunuque éthiopien de la Reine Candace (8,26-40) évoque clairement un cadre de *Diaspora*. Enfin, l'envoi en mission de Paul vers les Païens se fait sur la route de Damas, ville qui n'est pas sans rappeler les guerres syro-éphraïmites (la capitale d'Éphraïm est Samarie depuis sa fondation par Omri). Ces différents éléments permettent de conclure que la dispersion de Judée et

⁸ Ce sont deux des trois usages dans les Actes, seul livre à utiliser ce vocable.

⁹ La critique textuelle est délicate sur ce sujet. En effet, beaucoup choisissent d'évacuer l'article défini pour deux raisons: d'une part, Samarie a changé de nom (Sébaste) et d'autre part, l'absence d'article s'harmonise bien avec le contexte. Il me semble au contraire qu'il faut garder l'article, et ce pour deux raisons: d'une part, les témoins de cette version sont solides (℣⁷⁴ & A B 69 181 460* 1175 1898). D'autre part, c'est la seule fois où le vocable «Samarie» est associé avec celui de «ville» et il est très significatif d'évoquer cette ville au moment où le récit quitte Jérusalem (nous reviendrons sur cette dualité plus loin). Nous préférons donc: εἰς τὴν πόλιν τῆς Σαμαρείας, «dans la ville de Samarie». Que ce ne soit plus le nom de la ville théologise le vocable à souhait.

Samarie (8,1) est à considérer comme une charnière. Luc considère le passage par la Samarie — en lien avec la Judée — comme un événement déterminant de son interprétation des origines du christianisme. Il sera donc bon de mener cette enquête afin de comprendre pourquoi et comment Luc fait de la dispersion en Samarie un événement charnière. Il en va de sa méthode historiographique au service de sa théologie.

II. SAMARIE, ÉPINE HISTORIQUE ET HISTORICITÉ DE L'ÉVANGÉLISATION

Pour commencer notre enquête, il convient de savoir comment Luc lit l'Histoire, il importe de proposer un double point historique. Que sait-on de la Samarie? Et que sait-on de son évangélisation?

1. *La question samaritaine*

Pour ce qui est de l'Histoire de la Samarie, il faut s'arrêter quelques instants sur ce que l'on a coutume d'appeler «la question samaritaine». Il serait impossible de retracer cette question dans son intégralité, tant elle est longue est complexe ¹⁰. Il est bon simplement d'en rappeler les enjeux principaux pour comprendre ce qui sous-tend l'intérêt lucanien — et au passage, johannique — pour une telle thématique. Le clivage entre les samaritains et les juifs est le clivage fondamental du peuple élu. Avant l'exil, il trouve ses sources dans l'opposition entre les successeurs de Salomon, Roboam et Jéroboam amenant la distinction des deux royaumes: Israël au Nord et Juda au sud. Il se poursuit par les guerres syro-éphraïmites et trouve son apogée au moment de la destruction de Samarie et de la déportation affectant le royaume du Nord. C'est le royaume de Juda qui assume alors l'élection. Au retour de l'exil, sous la domination Perse, les tensions se nouent autour de la reconstruction des murs de Jérusalem et de la question de l'autorité sur la province. L'hellénisation de Samarie après la conquête d'Alexandre ainsi que l'élévation du Garizim par les yahwistes du nord attisent les différends. Sous la domination antiochienne, Flavius Josèphe dénonce la présence du culte de Zeus au Garizim et la prise de distance des samaritains par rapport à la révolte maccabéenne en Judée. La crise est maximale quand le judéen Jean Hyrcan détruit le temple du Garizim en 128 av. J.-C ¹¹. À cela s'ajoutent des revendications et des choix différentes

¹⁰ L'excellent colloque *Samaria and Diaspora* organisé par Dany Nocquet à l'Institut Protestant de Montpellier a débouché sur des résultats significatifs à ce sujet. Les Actes du colloque ne sont pas encore édités au moment de la rédaction de cet article.

¹¹ À ce sujet, lire l'excellent E. NODET, *La crise maccabéenne*. Historiographie juive et traditions bibliques (Paris 2005).

sur la réception des Écritures: les samaritains ne garderont que la *Torah*, évitant ainsi toute référence aux prophètes qui placent à Jérusalem le seul lieu de culte. Ce rapide parcours aura permis de comprendre que la cicatrice fondamentale dans l'unité d'Israël se trouve entre la Judée et la Samarie. Une étude plus approfondie aurait permis de constater qu'à cette question de l'unité est également liée à la question de la *Diaspora* et de l'ouverture sur les Nations. Récemment, Dany Nocquet ¹² a montré que les communautés yahwistes de Samarie partageaient avec la *Diaspora* une ouverture beaucoup plus manifeste face aux populations étrangères. Retenons ici que l'association Judée/Samarie dans le monde vétérotestamentaire pose la triple thématique de l'unité, du culte et de l'universalité. Ces éléments sous-tendent indiscutablement le projet théologique de Luc.

3. L'évangélisation «historique» en Samarie

Pour comprendre l'historiographie lucanienne, faisons un point à présent sur l'historicité de l'évangélisation en Samarie. Que s'est-il vraiment passé? On dispose de bien peu de sources externes, archéologiques ou littéraires, pour savoir quelle furent l'expansion et les modalités de l'évangélisation en Samarie. En revanche, on peut dire des choses à partir des sources internes, essentiellement l'évangile de Jean et les Actes. Nous reprenons ici la théorie séduisante d'Oscar Cullmann. En étudiant l'épisode de la Samaritaine, Cullmann montre que Jean évoque l'évangélisation de cette région. En effet, à la fin de l'épisode de la samaritaine, Jésus dit à ses apôtres : «là où vous ne vous êtes pas fatigués, d'autres (ἄλλοι) se sont fatigués!» Pour Cullmann, ces ἄλλοι sont des hellénistes ayant évangélisé la Samarie ¹³. Ainsi, Jn rejoint Lc quant à l'idée d'une évangélisation de la Samarie par les hellénistes, en l'occurrence, en Actes, par le diacre Philippe.

Nous citons longuement Cullman dont les conclusions sont parfois excessives mais qui permet de saisir des éléments historiques présents dans Actes sur l'évangélisation de la Samarie.

Nous devrions, dans l'histoire du christianisme primitif, attribuer une plus grande importance à ces Hellénistes de la première communauté. Nous n'en connaissons au fond qu'un seul : Etienne. De Philippe nous savons

¹² D. NOCQUET, *La Samarie, la Diaspora et l'achèvement de la Torah*. Territorialités et internationalités dans l'Héxateuque (Fribourg – Göttingen 2017).

¹³ O. CULLMANN, «La Samarie et les origines de la mission chrétienne. Qui sont les Ἰουδαῖοι de Jean IV, 38?» *École pratique des hautes études, Section des sciences religieuses. Annuaire* (1953-1954) 3-12.

précisément qu'il a prêché avec d'autres membres du même groupe l'évangile avec succès en Samarie; [...] Le livre des Actes nous fait connaître dans le discours d'Etienne (Actes, *vii*, 2 et suiv.) les idées théologiques particulières des Hellénistes; ils condamnaient le culte du Temple. [...] Ce sont ces idées révolutionnaires qui valurent à Etienne la lapidation par les Juifs, et elles sont à la base de la première persécution des chrétiens. Celle-ci ne frappa pas toute l'Église de Jérusalem, mais uniquement ce groupe des Hellénistes, partisans d'Etienne. [...] Les douze ne partageaient pas les idées des Hellénistes sur le culte du Temple, et manifestement ils ne se sont pas solidarisés avec eux au moment de la persécution. Aussi ne furent-ils pas inquiétés et purent-ils même rester à Jérusalem (Actes, *viii*, 1). Cette première persécution donna lieu à la première mission chrétienne, qui est précisément la mission en Samarie. En effet, les Hellénistes expulsés de Jérusalem prêchèrent l'évangile dans les régions où ils se réfugièrent, et le livre des Actes nous parle de leur activité en Samarie. Pourquoi se sont-ils tournés précisément du côté de la Samarie? Nous le comprenons parfaitement, lorsque nous nous rappelons que les Samaritains rejetaient eux aussi le culte du Temple et que, sous ce rapport, ils étaient proches d'eux. Quoi de plus naturel pour ceux qui avaient été persécutés à cause de leur opposition contre le Temple de Jérusalem que de se réfugier auprès de ceux que cette même question séparait depuis longtemps des Juifs? ¹⁴

On peut estimer que le croisement de Jean et Actes donne une idée assez précise des événements tels qu'ils se sont déroulés. Historiquement, il est possible d'affirmer que la Samarie fut l'un des premiers théâtres de la division au sein de la communauté chrétienne. Il s'agit de désaccords entre la conception judéenne et la conception hellénistique du christianisme. Ces désaccords prolongent ceux que nous avons évoqués plus haut à l'intérieur de la communauté juive, entre judéens et membres de la *Diaspora*, notamment sur la question du culte.

Il faut à présent voir comment Luc exploite ces faits historiques. Il connaît la question samaritaine et ses dimensions vétérotestamentaires. Ils connaît aussi l'évangélisation de la Samarie. Les Actes suggèrent les désaccords samaritains mais ne s'attardent pas sur ces conflits historiques, voire les gommant (Cf. Ac 9,31: «Cependant, les églises jouissaient de la paix dans toute la Judée, la Galilée et la Samarie»). Mais c'est précisément parce que Luc fait œuvre d'historiographe. Il relit les événements dans un sens théologique. Comment traite-t-il vraiment la question de la Samarie? Quel rôle lui donne-t-il dans son œuvre d'historien théologique. C'est en comprenant comment Luc met en récit tous ces événements que nous comprendrons l'interprétation qu'il leur donne.

¹⁴ O. CULLMANN, «La Samarie et les origines de la mission chrétienne», 10.

III. LA SAMARIE DANS L'ÉVANGILE DE LUC

1. *La Samarie pour introduire la deuxième partie l'évangile de Luc*

Il est essentiel de repérer que Luc a préparé le traitement du motif samaritain dès son premier volume. Cela est d'autant plus notable que cette région et ses habitants sont totalement absents de Marc et à peine évoqué en Matthieu (la seule occurrence en Mt 10,5 précise au contraire aux disciples: «N'allez pas vers les païens, et n'entrez pas dans les villes des Samaritains!»)¹⁵. L'évangile de Luc se saisit de la Samarie avec beaucoup plus d'envergure. De plus, son intérêt pour la Samarie apparaît à un moment très significatif. Alors qu'en Lc 9,51, «Jésus durcit sa face vers Jérusalem», il envoie des messagers «dans un village des samaritains pour lui préparer un logement, mais on ne le reçut pas car il se dirigeait vers Jérusalem» (Lc 9,52-53). Plusieurs éléments se mettent en place ici: le désir de Jésus de passer par la Samarie pour monter à Jérusalem, l'opposition des Samaritains envers Jérusalem et par suite, la division entre judéens et samaritains. Au demeurant, la lecture de Daniel Marguerat et Emmanuelle Steffek est intéressante.

«Une lecture superficielle de l'épisode du non-accueil des Samaritains, en Lc 9,51-56, donne à penser que ceux-ci sont stigmatisés par Luc. Toutefois, si d'aucuns sont réprimandés dans cette histoire, ce ne sont pas les Samaritains mais Jacques et Jean qui proposent à Jésus de faire tomber sur eux le feu du ciel! Les Samaritains n'ont pas accueilli Jésus, mais ils ne sont pas châtiés pour autant. Du reste, tant dans l'Évangile que dans les Actes, jamais ceux qui refusent la Bonne Nouvelle ne sont l'objet d'un châtiment»¹⁶.

Il est surtout intéressant de constater qu'en Luc (comme en Actes), au moment où commençait la deuxième des trois parties, à savoir la montée vers Jérusalem, la question samaritaine avait surgi. En effet, nous l'avons vu, dans l'organisation de son évangile, Luc avait inséré une partie intermédiaire (Lc 9,51 – 19,27) dans laquelle se met en place la figure du prophète rejeté. Luc avait déjà eu besoin de cette partie intermédiaire pour

¹⁵ Jean, nous l'avons vu, fait preuve d'une proximité bien plus aiguë avec Luc. Il se montre plus disert que Marc et plus favorable que Matthieu par rapport aux samaritains. Pour notre propos, plusieurs éléments sont intéressants chez Jean: d'une part, Jésus s'adresse à une femme de Samarie alors que dans la pensée commune, «les juifs n'ont pas de relations avec les samaritains» (Jn 4,9). D'autre part, Jésus lui-même se voit traiter de samaritain par les judéens: «N'avons-nous pas raison de dire que tu es un Samaritain, et que tu as un démon?» (Jn 8,48).

¹⁶ D. MARGUERAT – E. STEFFEK, «Luc-Actes et la naissance du Dieu universelle», *ETR* 87 (2012) 40.

articuler la reconnaissance de Jésus comme prophète et son rejet à Jérusalem. Déjà la Samarie avait joué un rôle transitionnel dans le traitement théologique entre la première et la troisième partie de l'évangile.

4. *Le Bon Samaritain et les dix lépreux*

Que la question samaritaine jaillisse dès le début de la deuxième partie de Luc prépare le lecteur à voir dans la Samarie une question à régler dans la partie intermédiaire d'Actes. Cette question est à nouveau abordée à deux autres occasions en Lc 9,51 – 19,27. D'abord dans la bouche de Jésus lui-même dès le début de cette partie, par la parabole lucanienne du Bon Samaritain. Le Samaritain y est avantageusement mis en balance avec le clergé de Jérusalem. Libre de toute pureté rituelle, il prend soin de l'homme battu. Jésus renverse ainsi les *a priori* et dénonce un ritualisme restreint du Temple de Jérusalem.

La Samarie revient par le biais des dix lépreux en Lc 17,11-19. Aletti a montré le sens de la démarche du Samaritain qui revient auprès de Jésus après sa guérison. «En demandant aux foules, qui assistent à l'action de grâces du Samaritain, où sont les neuf autres lépreux guéris, Jésus soulève implicitement la question de son identité, et ce, à son propre peuple: seul un Samaritain, un homme considéré comme bâtard et schismatique par les Juifs d'alors, a compris (i) qu'il lui était désormais impossible de séparer la louange à Dieu et l'action de grâces à Jésus, (ii) que cela même devait précéder toute autre démarche, fût-elle celle de la réintégration par un prêtre»¹⁷.

À nouveau la question culturelle apparaît ici et confirme le lien que nous avons suggéré entre un discours d'Étienne à distance du Temple et la dispersion en Samarie. La comparaison induite par Jésus lui-même en Lc 4,27 avec Naaman le syrien («Il y avait beaucoup de lépreux en Israël...») «souligne bien qu'un étranger, considéré par les Israélites comme un mal croyant, leur donne pourtant un exemple de foi véritable et parfaite»¹⁸. Autrement formulé «Luc invite son lecteur, sa lectrice à discerner la préfiguration d'un salut qui ne peut pas encore déborder les frontières d'Israël, mais englobe à l'intérieur d'Israël ceux que les purs rejettent en dehors de l'espace de sainteté»¹⁹. Ainsi, Luc a grandement préparé les éléments qui permettront au lecteur des Actes de saisir le sens de la question samaritaine dans la partie intermédiaire des Actes:

¹⁷ J.-N. ALETTI, *Le Jésus de Luc* (Paris 2010) 93.

¹⁸ J.-N. ALETTI, *Le Jésus de Luc*, 95.

¹⁹ D. MARGUERAT – E. STEFFEK, «Luc-Actes», 40.

cela touche à l'adoration du vrai Dieu, à l'unification d'Israël et à l'ouverture du salut aux païens, les trois étant liés à la christologisation de la foi.

IV. LA THÉOLOGIE DE LA SAMARIE DANS LES ACTES DES APÔTRES

1. *Un point de passage obligé: unité de l'Église et ouverture aux païens*

Ces quelques éléments trop rapides, internes et externes au diptyque Luc-Actes, permettent de comprendre pourquoi Luc choisit de placer la question de l'unité Judée/Samarie comme un passage obligé entre Jérusalem et les extrémités de la terre. Un double enjeu se dessine: il en va de l'unité du peuple élu. Il en va aussi du statut de la *Diaspora*/dispersion chrétienne, et donc de l'annonce à toutes les Nations. On le pressent, pour les païens, l'évangélisation (terme dont 12 des 15 occurrences en Actes se trouvent en Actes 8–15) va de pair avec la question de l'unité: l'unité interne au judaïsme (Judée/Samarie) est paradigmatique de l'unité interne au christianisme (circoncis/païen). On comprend mieux ici pourquoi Luc a voulu gommer les disparités entre judéens et hellénistes: il leur a substitué une théologie de l'unité et de l'universalité. Ainsi Cullmann ajoute qu'en Samarie «Pierre et Jean n'avaient qu'à moissonner en Samarie où le véritable “travail” missionnaire avait été accompli par ces “autres”, les Hellénistes pour la plupart anonymes. Pourtant, cela devait être décisif aussi pour Pierre. Car, peu de temps après ces événements, nous lui voyons, dans le livre des Actes, inaugurer la mission parmi les païens»²⁰. Ainsi, si en Samarie s'est déjà joué une évangélisation par des hellénistes, ce qui s'y trame surtout, c'est le passage vers les Nations: la venue de Pierre et Jean depuis Jérusalem jusqu'en Samarie, avec le don du même Esprit saint (Ac 8,17), est paradigmatique de l'unité de l'Église en même temps que de sa vocation universelle. Pour Luc, on ne peut passer de Jérusalem aux extrémités du monde sans passer par la Samarie.

En rassemblant toutes ces idées, nous saisissons la méthode historiographique de Luc. Il s'agit avant tout de faire une théologie de l'Histoire. L'auteur n'évoque pas la Samarie simplement pour faire une chronique des étapes de l'évangélisation. Il choisit la Samarie comme paradigme de la question de l'unité et de l'ouverture aux Nations²¹. C'est une version

²⁰ O. CULLMANN, «La Samarie et les origines de la mission chrétienne», 11.

²¹ Il serait intéressant de lire ce qu'en dit Simon Buttica dans le sixième chapitre de sa thèse: *L'identité de l'Église dans les Actes des Apôtres*. De la restauration d'Israël à la conquête universelle (Berlin 2010). Notamment le 6.4.5 «La Samarie en Ac 8» (208) et 6.4.6 «Conclusion: les samaritains dans l'ecclésiologie lucanienne» (213).

narrative de Jn 17,21: «Que tous soient un [...] pour que le monde croie». Ainsi, fidèle à sa théologie de la paix et de l'harmonie, Luc évoque à peine la question de l'opposition entre les judéens et les hellénistes et il construit narrativement la Samarie comme lieu symbolique, en vis-à-vis de la Judée: il déploie une historiographie de l'unité et de la Mission.

5. Pourquoi prolonger la «Judée/Samarie» jusqu'en Actes 15 ?

C'est cette même approche historiographique qui permet de proposer les limites de cette deuxième partie des Actes en 8,1 et 15,33, même si certains événements ne correspondent pas strictement — géographique-ment — au titre «Judée et Samarie». La titulature Judée/Samarie ne renvoie pas tant à une expansion géographique qu'à un lieu théologique. Si le plan n'était que «local», la deuxième partie des Actes s'achèverait en Ac 8,25, avec la fin des épisodes samaritains. Démontrons que la partie intitulée «toute la Judée et Samarie» s'achève en 15,33 et non en 8,25 ou 9,31.

La première raison serait sans doute celle de l'équilibre du récit. Dans la littérature hellénistique, on conçoit difficilement un récit en trois parties dont la deuxième serait totalement atrophiée par rapport aux deux autres.

Une deuxième raison de poursuivre jusqu'en Actes 15 est la narration étonnante du voyage qui amène Paul, Barnabé et quelques compagnons à Jérusalem en Actes 15. En effet, en 15,3, il est précisé qu'«après avoir été accompagnés par l'Église, ils traversèrent la Phénicie et la Samarie, racontant la conversion des païens, et ils causèrent une grande joie à tous les frères». Cette ultime mention de la Samarie, *a priori* annexe dans le récit, se fait en lien avec les païens et au moment où commence le concile de Jérusalem: cela constitue certainement un signal narratif que la «problématique samaritaine» — en lien avec la conversion des Nations — n'est pas encore éteinte.

Il est une troisième raison, plus décisive, de prolonger la deuxième partie jusqu'en Actes 15 et de poser l'unité de la partie Actes 8–15. Il s'agit des thématiques majeures exhumées depuis Actes 8: les fondements de l'unité de la communauté, la question de l'accès au culte et l'ouverture aux païens. En cela, un parcours rapide sur les événements emmène indiscutablement le lecteur jusqu'au chapitre 15, au Concile de Jérusalem. C'est là que se joue la triple question soulevée avec Actes 8 et qui, au fond, n'en forme qu'une seule: unité du peuple, modalité du culte (circoncision ou non) et universalité de l'évangile. C'est à Jérusalem qu'est réglé, au moins juridiquement ²², l'accès des païens à la Bonne Nouvelle, et par suite la relation

²² Dans les faits, la question était en fait loin d'être réglée. Les 2^{ème} et 3^{ème} voyages de Paul le démontreront.

entre judéo et pagano-chrétiens. À bien regarder, sauf peut-être Actes 12 (la délivrance de Pierre), tous les chapitres traitent de cette question:

- Actes 8: L'évangélisation de la Samarie par un helléniste. Baptême d'un eunuque de la Diaspora.
- Actes 9: Chemin de Damas : envoi en mission de Paul, instrument de choix devant les Nations païennes.
- Actes 10–11: Corneille : «Sous contrainte divine» constat par Pierre que Dieu a accordé le même don aux païens.
- Actes 13–14 ²³: Première mission: en synagogue, rejet par des juifs, accueil par des craignant-Dieu. Question des conditions d'accès des païens à régler.
- Actes 15: Concile de Jérusalem: décision quant aux exigences requises aux païens embrassant la foi.

Aletti remarque en outre, dans un tableau éclairant ²⁴, qu'en Actes 8–14, les destinataires de l'évangile dévoilent une ouverture progressive aux Nations. Actes 15 vient simplement en recueillir les aspérités et en donner les conditions d'accroche au judaïsme.

6. *Le statut du premier voyage missionnaire*

Avant de revenir sur le cas d'Actes 12 qui semble mal cadrer avec cet ensemble, il est bon de justifier la présence du premier voyage missionnaire (Actes 13–14) dans un ensemble portant le nom de *Judée/Samarie* ²⁵. Que dire du voyage de Saul et Barnabé en Asie Mineure? Ce premier voyage est précisément ce qui a trompé beaucoup d'auteurs sur le plan des Actes. Ces derniers ont trop souvent compté ce voyage au nombre des quatre voyages de Paul recensés dans les Actes. Mais à bien regarder le statut du premier voyage (Actes 13–14), on s'aperçoit qu'il n'est pas simplement le premier d'une série. Il est au contraire «hors-série» et revêt un statut autre que les suivants ²⁶. Il est une vaste préparation au Concile de Jérusalem. Il met en place toute la problématique du refus de l'évangile par la synagogue et son accueil par les Nations. Paul et Barnabé

²³ L'un des points qui fait difficultés chez les exégètes pour prolonger la deuxième partie du récit jusqu'en Actes 15 est le premier voyage missionnaire de Paul en Actes 13–14. Nous voyons pourtant que ce voyage est bien à inscrire dans la thématique de cette partie : s'y joue très concrètement la question de l'unité juif/païen dont la dyade Judée/Samarie est paradigmatique.

²⁴ J.-N. ALETTI, *Quand Luc raconte*, 154.

²⁵ Actes 10–11 (Corneille) ne pose pas le même problème puisque Césarée maritime faisait partie de la province romaine de Samarie.

²⁶ On pourra simplement remarquer que les discours d'Actes 13–14 s'ancrent encore fortement dans l'Ancien Testament, à la manière de ceux d'Actes 1–7, alors que les discours de Paul à partir d'Actes 16 délaissent cet aspect.

en font concrètement l'expérience. Actes 13–14 préparent tangiblement les questions prises en main à Jérusalem en Actes 15. Le narrateur le confirme par la brièveté du discours de Paul au concile. C'est un discours indirect qui convoque les chapitres 13 et 14 mais qui serait incompréhensible sans eux: «on écoutait Barnabé et Paul exposer tout ce que Dieu avait accompli par eux de signes et de prodiges parmi les païens» (Ac 15,12). Cette analepse du voyage évite aux questions du concile (l'unité Juifs/Païens, la *diaspora* chrétienne, l'accès des Nations au salut) d'être hors-sol! Le voyage en Asie mineure est tout orienté vers ces questions, dont le paradigme est la dualité *Judée/Samarie*. Ces questions sont réglées en Actes 15 sous la modalité de la circoncision des Païens. Que cette question soit prise en main au retour du premier voyage et que Paul monte à Jérusalem en passant par la Samarie atteste qu'Actes 13–14 est vraiment intégré dans la section Actes 8–15: *Judée/Samarie*. Une fois l'unité conciliaire obtenue au sein du christianisme naissant entre judéo et pagano-chrétiens, la *Diaspora* chrétienne peut se répandre sans limite.

7. *Le diptyque Pierre/Paul en entrelacement*

Il faut à présent regarder ce qu'il en est d'Actes 12 (la délivrance de Pierre). La présence de ce chapitre qui semble en distance avec la thématique Juifs/Nations stimule à revenir à la *synkrisis* dont sont l'objet Pierre (Actes 1–12) et Paul (Actes 13–26). Nous en avons exhumé le rôle structurant pour la composition des Actes. Cette *synkrisis* invite à approfondir encore l'historiographie lucanienne. Luc, nous l'avons vu, porte la question de l'articulation entre Jérusalem et les extrémités de la terre, entre juifs et païens. Pour cela, il a décidé de passer par la question de l'unité Judée/Samarie et celle de l'articulation Temple/diaspora. Il a également décidé de faire porter ces questions par l'articulation entre les deux grands personnages de son récit: Pierre et Paul.

Les deux cycles de Pierre et Paul commencent tous deux par un discours de même facture (Actes 2 et Actes 13) et s'achèvent l'un et l'autre par une «Passion/résurrection» symbolique (Actes 12 et Actes 27). Les deux sont en *synkrisis* avec Jésus, Paul est en *synkrisis* avec Pierre. Cette *synkrisis* est importante pour montrer que Paul, comme Pierre, est fidèle à Jésus. Pour autant, Luc n'a pas voulu accoler ces deux cycles sans travailler à leur jointure. Aletti lui-même, qui a mis en évidence une composition bipartite en se fondant sur les *synkrisis*, repère «un tuilage permettant de souder les deux ensembles: Actes 9 préparerait le cycle de Paul et Actes 15 serait le dernier passage où Pierre a un rôle décisif à jouer»²⁷. La présence en

²⁷ J.-N. ALETTI, *Quand Luc raconte*, 76.

Samarie de Pierre en Actes 8 — venant de Jérusalem — et celle de Paul en Actes 15 — venant des Nations — confirment vraiment ce tuilage, à nouveau par le biais samaritain. Ainsi, Luc a voulu éviter que Pierre et Paul se succèdent sans autre formalité, fussent-ils liés par une *synkrisis*. S'il y a bien parallélisme entre les deux personnages, le narrateur veut éviter un plan du type: (I) Pierre à Jérusalem; (II) Paul aux extrémités du monde. Il fallait que la mission de Paul s'attache à celle de Pierre par un autre mode qu'une simple exemplarité de succession ou d'expansion. La *synkrisis* existe, est structurante, mais n'est pas le tout de l'accrochage entre les deux apôtres.

C'est à cet accrochage que servent les chapitres 8 à 15. Regardons le *modus operandi*: avant 7,58, pas de Paul; après Ac 15,6, plus de Pierre. Entre les deux, on trouve un chassé-croisé remarquable qu'on peut schématiser ainsi:

Ac 7,58 – 11,26: **PIERRE** en majeure (Samarie – Corneille) – *Saul en entrée (Damas)*

Ac 7,58 – **SAUL** persécuteur à Jérusalem

Ac 8 – **PIERRE** en SAMARIE

Saul de Jérusalem à Damas (9,1-2)

Ac 9 – Envoi en mission de **SAUL** juif vers païens

Saul de Damas à Jérusalem (9,26-31)

Ac 9,32–11 – **PIERRE** sur la côte – Corneille : baptême païen

Ac 11,25-26 – **SAUL** à Antioche (chrétiens)

Ac 11,27-30 – **SAUL** à Jérusalem

Ac 12 – délivrance de **PIERRE**

Saul de Jérusalem à Antioche (Ac 12,25)

Ac 13–14 – Mission de **SAUL** : juifs/païens. **PAUL**.

Paul d'Antioche à Jérusalem (Ac 15,3-4) : SAMARIE

Ac 15 – **PIERRE** au Concile de Jérusalem

Ac 15,35 – **PAUL** évangéliste à Antioche

Ac 11,27 – 15,35: **PAUL** en majeure (Asie Mineure) – *Pierre en sortie (Délivrance)*

Le passage de témoin se fait par une alternance. On peut ici appliquer le principe de l'entrelacement proposé par Lucien de Samosate, et mis en lumière par Dupont²⁸. Pierre est encore le protagoniste en Actes 8–11 : c'est au cœur de sa prise de conscience de l'ouverture aux païens que se fait l'appel de Saul. En revanche, en Actes 12–15, Pierre sort progressivement du récit. Actes 12 constitue le premier pas, sans doute le plus décisif, de la sortie de Pierre. En Ac 12,17, il est dit que Pierre «sortit et s'en alla dans un autre endroit». Marguerat a bien montré que Luc «ménage discrètement, en 12,17, l'évasion narrative du personnage de Pierre hors de son récit»²⁹. À partir de ce moment, c'est Paul qui porte la mission et qui rapporte à Jérusalem la question des rites pour les païens. Pierre intervient une dernière fois et le concile donne à Paul les moyens de sa mission aux extrémités de la terre. Pierre est l'homme de Jérusalem qui légitime le baptême des païens, Paul celui de la *Diaspora* qui va jusqu'au bout du monde. L'un et l'autre articulent d'une part l'élection juive — qu'ils portent tous deux dans leur chair — et d'autre part l'annonce universelle — que Pierre reçoit et théorise; que Paul actualise et répand. Dans le passage de témoin entre ces deux hommes se joue la question de la charnière entre Jérusalem et les Nations. On comprend à présent que la deuxième partie des Actes va bien jusqu'en Actes 15, là-même où les deux apôtres s'accordent sur l'ancrage des Nations au judaïsme. La troisième partie des Actes peut commencer.

V. UN PLAN TRIPARTI

1. *Actes 16 comme un nouveau départ*

Les conclusions auxquelles nous sommes parvenus sont confirmées par l'unité de la narration en Actes 16–28. C'est vraiment en Actes 16 que commence le grand et dernier voyage de Paul et, par suite, son voyage jusqu'aux extrémités de la terre. Plusieurs éléments spécifient cette dernière partie. Dès Ac 16,9 s'organise le passage en Macédoine, c'est-à-dire dans le monde hellénistique dans toute sa symbolique géographique (au-delà de l'Hellespont). C'est également en Actes 16 que le narrateur s'insère dans le récit par des *sections en nous*. Le rythme narratif change

²⁸ J. DUPONT, *Nouvelles Études*, 29

²⁹ D. MARGUERAT, «L'évasion de Pierre et la mort du tyran (Actes 12): un jeu d'échos intertextuels» in *Quand la Bible se raconte* (Lire la Bible 134; Paris 2003) 185.

aussi pour prendre la tournure et le ton d'un véritable *carnet de voyage*, différents y compris d'Actes 13–14. Ce qu'on appelle habituellement les trois voyages n'en font qu'un seul : il est même très difficile de distinguer les voyages, tant Luc passe insensiblement du deuxième au troisième (Paul est à peine rentré qu'il repart en 18,22–23) et confusément du troisième au quatrième. De plus, Fitzmyer montre bien qu'après Actes 15, il n'y a plus que 2 citations de l'Ancien Testament, en fort contraste avec ce qui précède³⁰. Au contraire, il y a de plus en plus d'emprunts à la culture grecque³¹. Enfin, c'est Paul, et non plus directement Jésus comme en Actes 13–14, qui devient progressivement l'objet du témoignage³². Il suffit pour cela de considérer les deux témoignages de Paul à propos du chemin de Damas (Actes 22 et 26). Actes 16–28 change décidément de paradigme narratif et littéraire par rapport à ce qui précède.

2. Proposer un plan

Notre étude a montré que l'insertion par Luc d'une charnière intermédiaire (8–15), qu'il nomme Judée/Samarie, lui permettait de mettre en évidence l'articulation entre l'élection d'Israël, l'unité du Peuple saint, l'ouverture au vrai culte et le salut universel. Ainsi, la structure mise en évidence (1–7; 8–15; 16–28) porte un sens théologique indubitable. Il aurait été dommageable de passer sous silence ce talent lucanien pour une historiographie théologique.

Il est temps, pour conclure, de proposer un plan simplifié des Actes des Apôtres qui reprend succinctement les acquis de notre réflexion :

³⁰ J.A. FITZMYER, *The Acts of the Apostles. A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (New Haven, CT – London 2008) 91.

³¹ Cf. J.-N. ALETTI, «Quelle culture pour le narrateur de Lc/Ac? Des techniques à la théologie», in *Like a Watered Garden*, Volume II (eds. S. SAVARIMUTHU – P.J. TITUS – M.D.S. KUMAR et al.) (Bengaluru 2017) 38–54.

³² Aletti (*Quand Luc raconte*, 101) a insisté sur cette dimension de Paul, témoin à imiter, en montrant que «les épreuves de Paul sont celles du prophète rejeté par les siens à cause de sa vocation même, drame stigmatisé et prophétisé par Jésus en son discours inaugural (Lc 4). Mais comment ne pas voir que le narrateur joue sur cette reproduction d'un drame qui a eu pour acteurs tous les prophètes, afin de montrer qu'il trouve en Paul son acmé et son tournant, car avec son témoignage se réalise pleinement le plan de Dieu en faveur des Nations?». ».

1,1-12 PROLOGUE: L'Ascension: «vous serez mes témoins à JÉRUSALEM, dans toute LA JUDÉE ET SAMARIE et jusqu'à L'EXTRÉMITÉ DE LA TERRE»



I. 1,13–8,1a – Croissance et persécution **JÉRUSALEM**

PIERRE

A. 1,13–4,22 Les signes de la Pentecôte: communion et croissance

⇅ 4,23–31 ♦ Transition et Sommaire de communion ⇅

B. 4,36–8,1a L'Église ébranlée: péchés et persécutions



8,1b–4 TRANSITION

Persécution JÉRUSALEM Dispersion JUDÉE SAMARIE. SOMMAIRE ÉVANGÉLISATION



II. 8,5–15,29: Dispersion/évangélisation en JUDEE/SAMARIE **Unité Église – Circoncis/Païens**

PIERRE ET PAUL

A. 8,5–11,18 Les signes de l'expansion vers les païens

⇅ 11,19–30 ♦ Transition et Sommaire d'évangélisation ⇅

B. 12,1–15,33 De Pierre à Paul: l'accrochage des païens aux circoncis



15,35–16,5 TRANSITION

SOMMAIRE ÉVANGÉLISATION TRANSITION: Divisions-Affermissement-Circoncision



III. 16,6–28,30 – Jusqu'à

L'EXTRÉMITÉ DE LA TERRE «carnet de voyage»

PAUL

A. 16,6–19,20 ♦ La fondation d'Églises en Grèce

B. 19,21–28,11 ♦ Montée à Jérusalem et Passion de Paul



28,30–31 *Épilogue ♦ Sommaire d'annonce du Royaume*

Faculté Notre-Dame
Collège des Bernardins
18 rue de Poissy
75005 Paris
jeanphilippefabre@gmail.com

Jean-Philippe FABRE

SUMMARY

The structure of the book of the Acts of the Apostles is disputed. Indeed, the principles of composition used by Luke are multiple, and it is difficult to discern the dominant criterion: literary, geographical, theological, or historiographical. However, Luke himself announces the framework of his work, by the words of Jesus, in Acts 1,8: between Jerusalem and the ends of the world, an entire part will be dedicated to Judea / Samaria. This study shows, working on the Lukan theology of Samaria in its connection with Judea, that Luke builds this intermediate part from Acts 8 (dispersion in Samaria) to Acts 15 (Council of Jerusalem). Lukan historiography used the paradigm of Judaea / Samaria, but also that of Peter / Paul, to articulate Judaism and the Nations. As a result, it raised the question of the unity of the Jewish- and Gentile-Christian churches. This article, by way of conclusion, proposes a coherent three-part structure of the book of Acts.

“SO YOU SHALL PUT AWAY THE EVIL FROM AMONG YOU”:
EXCLUSION FROM THE COMMUNITY
IN DEUTERONOMY AND IN THE EARLY PAULINE CHURCHES
(1 CORINTHIANS 5–7)

I. THE INTERTEXTUAL PAUL

In the world of literary studies, and not only there, seeing that psycholinguistics also has an interest here, there has been for some decades a heated debate on that branch of literature (and of cinematography) which goes under the name of *intertextuality*. The debate began when Julia Kristeva (an author famous as much for her studies of a psychological character as for her astute investigations of the various expressive forms of world literature) used this term for the first time to indicate a phenomenon on the basis of which texts are sometimes presented as mosaics of citations by virtue of their absorbing and transformation of other texts ¹. Kristeva defined intertextuality as:

the textual interaction which takes place within a single text. For the knowing subject, intertextuality is an idea which will be the indicator of the way in which a text is reading history and inserting itself into it ².

Despite the beauty and charm of Kristeva's theories, the French scholar R. Barthes has reacted powerfully against the growth of studies on intertextuality, claiming that assigning an excessive importance to intertextual links ends up irremediably in downgrading the role of the final author with all that this also involves at the methodological level ³. Despite this intense criticism, together with the authority of the semiology which has launched it, the study of intertextuality has nevertheless known a notable development, attaining a careful systematic treatment at the hands of another Frenchman, Gérard Genette ⁴, who in his works distinguishes:

¹ See J. KRISTEVA, *Σημειωτική*. Recherches pour une sémanalyse (Paris 1969) 146.

² J. KRISTEVA, *Materia e senso*. Pratiche significanti e teorie del linguaggio (Torino 1980) 20.

³ R. BARTHES, “La mort de l’auteur”, in *Le bruissement de la langue*. Essais critiques IV (Paris 1993).

⁴ G. GENETTE, *Palimpsestes*. La littérature au second degré (Paris 1984).

- Intertext = the effective presence of one text in another by means of explicit and implicit citations, allusions or imitations;
- Paratext = presence of titles, subtitles, preface, instructions, notes, opinions of other authors, illustrations which recall another text;
- Metatext = a text which has for its subject another text with which it has a critical or reflective relationship;
- Hypertext = every text derived by transformation from another text (hypotext), but not in the form of a comment;
- Architext = the body of everything which refers to texts which share common characteristics at the level of the literary genre.

As will become evident in the discussion that follows, this essay is interested principally in the phenomenon of the intertext, even if, sometimes, Paul, the author whom we are studying, lends himself to being read rightly also according to the categories of metatextuality, hypertextuality and sometimes even architextuality. Over and above these classifications, which do not assume a fundamental importance for us, we need to keep clearly in mind the insight of Kristeva at the point in which she affirms that citations, allusions or even simple echoes are “the indicator of the way in which a text is reading history and inserting itself into it”.

This union between past and present, between old and new, between memory and today, is precisely the characteristic of the Bible which cites the Bible, of the New Testament which cites the Old, of Paul who draws on Deuteronomy or Isaiah or Jeremiah, of rabbinic midrash in its heroic attempt to retell the eternal in a history which changes, even though existing substantially within the *nihil sub sole novum*. However, even if the adage of Qoh 1,10 can have value as a general maxim, it is not true for the apostle, whose disclosure of novelty, starting from Christ, is of an explosive power, even if it then necessitates a recovery of the older dimensions inherent in the sacred text, and one needs to ask why.

Along these lines, some good explanations have come from Richard Hays, the author who more than anyone has given a notable impulse to the study of Paul and the OT. Hays characterizes Pauline intertextuality as:

- 1) a type which continually recalls Scripture in a manner that is conscious or subconscious;
- 2) a subsidiary of the awareness acquired by Paul according to which God would speak directly through him at a time pregnant with divine events;

- 3) where the Scriptures are used almost as a counterpoint to the gospel with which the former share a reciprocal interpretative relationship so that, through Paul, the message of God might be communicated to others ⁵.

Consequently, the Pauline hermeneutic cannot be defined precisely as “midrashic” because, in contrast with the rabbis whose primary preoccupation was the continuous reinterpretation of the *depositum* of the word of God, for the apostle his reference to the Scriptures is, rather, secondary with respect to the idea that God is speaking directly and in a new manner through him within a history which has changed radically. Moreover, no rabbi, in his reading of the OT, could have thought of a hermeneutical principle like the one offered by Paul in 2 Cor 3,15-16:

To this day, when Moses is read, a veil weighs over their heart; but when there is a conversion to the Lord, that veil is taken away.

But over and above this admittedly decisive “novelty” in Paul’s thinking, it remains true nonetheless that between rabbinic *midrash* and Paul’s way of rereading Scripture there are huge similarities, above all on the formal level, precisely because of the common intertextual nature of their way of proceeding ⁶. Moreover, the closeness between Paul and the rabbinic world is undeniable with the apostle hailing from their very ranks. On this topic, Boyarin writes:

The rabbis, as assiduous readers of the Bible, developed an acute awareness of the intertextual relations within the holy books, and consequently their own hermeneutic work consisted of a creative process of further combining and recombining biblical verses into new texts. [...] This recreation was experienced as revelation itself, and the biblical past became alive in the midrashic present ⁷.

In another passage of the same work, Boyarin notes how, by bringing together parts of canonical exemplars within a new discourse, the rabbis are in fact allowing the biblical text “to generate its meanings — its original meanings — in ever new social and cultural situations” ⁸.

Paul certainly shares with the rabbis precisely this perspective: for him too, the Scriptures illuminate the significance of the present, coming to constitute a foundation which then seeks to be adapted to the present,

⁵ R. HAYS, *Echoes of Scripture in the Letters of Paul* (New Haven, CT 1989) 171-178.

⁶ HAYS, *Echoes*, 10-14.

⁷ D. BOYARIN, *Intertextuality and the Reading of Midrash* (Bloomington, IN 1990) 128.

⁸ BOYARIN, *Intertextuality*, 20.

as the text of 1 Corinthians evinces on several occasions, including the fundamental statement in 1 Cor 10,11:

Now these things happened to them in a figure (τύποι) and were written down for our warning (πρὸς νοουθεσίαν ἡμῶν), for us upon whom the end of ages has come ⁹.

A very similar statement is found in 1 Cor 10,6:

These things happened as example (τύποι) for us, not to desire evil things (εἰς τὸ μὴ εἶναι ἡμᾶς ἐπιθυμητὰς κακῶν), as they desired them.

Ancient Scriptures and the today of the community, past and present, are two vectors that play a fundamental role in the Christian reading of history along a hermeneutical line provided already by the first Christians, Paul above all. In fact, no one was Paul's equal in holding together knowledge of God acquired from the knowledge of the Sacred Scriptures and sensitivity to the flux of historical events in the first Christian communities ¹⁰. But how does the apostle meld together these dimensions? Why does he do so? According to what strategies?

We shall seek to answer these questions by analysing in particular the relationship existing between the deuteronomic legislation and its representation in Paul, starting out from a specific case: the citation and subsequent recontextualisation of the formula of exclusion from the community (καὶ ἐξαρεῖτε τὸν πονηρὸν ἐξ ὑμῶν αὐτῶν) in 1 Cor 5,13. We shall examine just how, through Paul, the today of Corinth enters into contact with texts, and above all contexts, already present in the Old Testament within the book of Deuteronomy.

II. 1 CORINTHIANS: A LETTER OF EXTENSIVE INTERTEXTUALITY

Through this brief cross-section on the modes of intertextuality in Paul, we are entering into that vast world of the “Bible which is citing the Bible”, with specific reference to Paul as an exegete. However, before tackling the particular case of the deuteronomic citation in 1 Cor 5,13, we shall seek to lay out a brief *status quaestionis* relating to the study of intertextuality applied to the letter which the apostle is writing to his most lively and problematic community.

⁹ See also Rom 15,4: “Since what was written before was written for our instruction (εἰς τὴν ἡμετέραν διδασκαλίαν), so that by the patience and the consolation which come from the Scriptures we might have hope”.

¹⁰ Excellent commentary on this topic is found in the slightly dated but still relevant article of D.E. AUNE, “Early Christian Biblical Interpretation”, *EvQ* 41 (1969) 89-96.

Perhaps not everyone knows that a good 1,368 verses of the OT are later repeated in the NT ¹¹. This really high number of intertextual references has long motivated scholars to examine carefully and extensively this prevalent aspect of the Scriptures. Even modern Bibles do not neglect to place in the margins of the text that network of references to which, in fact, each individual verse seems to lend itself. There are actually forms of prayer on the sacred text which use these marginal references as a form of “biblical navigation”. Some readers, above all in monastic circles, also engage in codifying entire lists of “horsemen”, that is to say, chains of citations, linked by the presence of the same biblical motif or theme, which permit the reader to ride over vast prairies of the sacred pages with the help of a very precise orientation. This is a procedure which is rooted in the ancient practice of *haruzin* (= chain, necklace of pearls), first attested in rabbinic circles and then continued by Christians in the patristic period.

Not even the advance of historical-critical study managed to set aside the interest in the phenomenon of the citations which has even undergone a revival, precisely by virtue of the advent of the historical methods, of a greater awareness of the Jewish world contemporary with the events of the NT, and of the greater availability, including electronic resources, for getting to the sources of the intertestamental, the Qumranic and, in the broad sense, the proto-rabbinic literature. This same tendency in scholarship has also influenced, in an ever-increasing degree, the study of the Pauline epistolary corpus, and with good reason because of the great exegetical aptitude of the apostle. However, the phenomenon of citation in Paul has not in fact always been investigated in all its depth, given that the focus is mostly on simply observing the phenomenon, but without succeeding to penetrate its more profound logic ¹².

In this particular case, the First Letter to the Corinthians exhibits no less than 19 direct citations and over a hundred clear allusions to the OT ¹³.

¹¹ Calculation provided by A.J.B. HIGGINS, *The Christian Significance of the Old Testament* (London 1949) 88.

¹² For some of these reflections, see P. BASTA, “*Inventio paolina e citazioni scritturistiche in 1 Cor 1-4*”, in F. BIANCHINI – S. ROMANELLO (eds.), *Non mi vergogno del Vangelo, potenza di Dio*. Studi in onore di Jean-Noël Aletti SJ, nel suo 70° compleanno (AnBib 200; Rome 2012) 19-44.

¹³ Calculation provided by F.S. MALAN, “The Old Testament in I Corinthians”, *Neot* 14 (1981) 134-170. R. PENNA, “Atteggiamenti di Paolo verso l’Antico Testamento”, *L’apostolo Paolo*. Studi di esegesi e teologia (Cinisello Balsamo 1991) 438 n. 3, arrives at a figure of “una novantina di passi di 1 Cor interessati all’AT, dei quali nove presentano citazioni esplicite con apposita introduzione”. For a complete survey of the citations and allusions in 1 Corinthians, see W. DITTMAR, *Vetus Testamentum in Novo. Briefe und Apokalypse*, Volume II (Göttingen 1903) 205-217; H. HÜBNER, *Vetus Testamentum in Novo. II: Corpus*

Such a large number justifies and encourages a careful analysis of this phenomenon. Moreover, it is sufficient to give even only a rapid glance at some titles that have appeared in recent years to take account of the fact that the study of Paul's recourse to Scripture in 1 Corinthians is presently knowing a phase of rapid and constant expansion, also by virtue of the good results reached so far in studies that adopt this perspective. If, in fact, up to ten years ago, there were many who held that Paul made use of the OT in contexts that were predominantly doctrinal ¹⁴, Rosner has, on the other hand, drawn attention to the use of the OT in fields of a more ethical nature also, as, for example, in the case of 1 Corinthians 5–7 ¹⁵. But the same interest has affected the sapiential *motif* of 1 Corinthians 1–4 ¹⁶, the section regarding the food offered to idols (1 Corinthians 8–10) where there appears a very clear *midrash* ¹⁷, and the comments regarding women's veils (1 Cor 11,2–16) ¹⁸.

And so we could go on and refer to the whole of 1 Corinthians, seeing that now it is the whole that has to be covered ¹⁹. However, some scholars prefer to concentrate not on the parts of 1 Corinthians in which extensive

Paulinum (Göttingen, 1997) 221–306; G.K. BEALE – D.A. CARSON, *Commentary on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI 2007) 695–752; H.H. DRAKE WILLIAMS III, “Light Giving Sources: Examining the Extent of Scriptural Citation and Allusion Influence in 1 Corinthians”, *Paul: Jew, Greek, and Roman* (ed. S.E. PORTER) (Pauline Studies 5; Leiden – Boston, MA 2008) 7–37.

¹⁴ In this connection, see P. BASTA, *Abramo in Romani* 4. L'analogia dell'agire divino nella ricerca esegetica di Paolo (AnBib 168; Rome 2007), a work in which I showed that Pauline exegesis of the OT in Romans 4 is first and foremost at the service of the Pauline thesis of justification by faith alone (a theme dear to the classical Lutheran reading), together, however, with the *motif* of the common fatherhood of Abraham of Jews and Gentiles (a theme dear to the *New Perspective*).

¹⁵ B.S. ROSNER, *Paul, Scripture, and Ethics. A Study of 1 Corinthians 5–7* (AGJU 22; Leiden – New York – Köln 1994).

¹⁶ H.H. DRAKE WILLIAMS III, *The Wisdom of the Wise. The Presence and Function of Scripture within 1 Cor. 1:18–3:23* (AGJU 49; Leiden 2000); J.S. LAMP, *First Corinthians 1–4 in Light of Jewish Wisdom Traditions. Christ, Wisdom and Spirituality* (SBEC 42; Lewiston – Queenston 2000).

¹⁷ See W.A. MEEKS, “‘And rose up to play’: Midrash and Paraenesis in 1 Corinthians 10:1–22”, *JSNT* 16 (1982) 64–78; P.J. TOMSON, *Paul and the Jewish Law. Halakha in the Letters of the Apostle to the Gentiles* (CRINT 3.1; Minneapolis, MN 1990); B. J. KOET, “The Old Testament Background to 1 Cor 10,7–8”, *The Corinthian Correspondence* (ed. R. BIERINGER) (BETHL 125; Leuven 1996) 607–615; B.J. OROPEZA, “Laying to Rest the Midrash: Paul's Message on Meat Sacrificed to Idols in Light of the Deuteronomistic Tradition”, *Bib* 79 (1998) 57–68; J.C. INOSTRA-LANAS, *Moisés e Israel en el desierto. El midrás paulino de 1 Cor 10,1–13* (Plenitudo temporis 6; Salamanca 2000).

¹⁸ See L.A. JERVIS, “‘But I Want You to Know...’: Paul's Midrashic Intertextual Response to the Corinthian Worshipers (1 Cor 11:2–16)”, *JBL* 112 (1993) 231–246.

¹⁹ This is what can be concluded from an even rapid glance at H. HÜBNER, *Vetus Testamentum in Novo. II. Corpus Paulinum* (Göttingen 1997) 221–306.

phenomena of citation or repetition appear, but rather on the presence of OT motifs or even on whole books of the OT which are echoed in Paul’s letter ²⁰. So much so that Thomas Brodie has already arrived at the claim that “dependence goes beyond both doctrinal and ethical passages and extends essentially into the entire text; the dependence is systematic ²¹.

III. THOMAS BRODIE ON THE INTERTEXTUALITY OF 1 CORINTHIANS:
A CRITICAL ASSESSMENT

It is precisely with Brodie that I begin my critical assessment of intertextuality in 1 Corinthians, because he is the author who, most of all, shows an audacious streak. On the one hand, he shines with originality, and, on the other, he leaves much without sufficient demonstration. I reproduce here one of his tables comparing 1 Corinthians and the whole of Deuteronomy ²²:

DEUTERONOMY AS A COMPONENT OF 1 CORINTHIANS			
AN EXPLORATIVE OUTLINE			
Deuteronomy		1 Corinthians	
Ch. 1	Judges; inherit the land.	6,1-11	Justice; inherit the kingdom.
2,1 – 4,40	Inheritances assigned; one only God.	7,17 – 8,6	Callings assigned; one only God.
4,32 – 5,33	(Exodus 19): Horeb/Sinai: the great, solemn revelation; the descent of God to Israel. Moses as mediator.		Cf. aspects of 15,1-5: the great revelation of the NT, solemnly announced. Apparitions. Paul as mediator.

²⁰ T.L. BRODIE, “The Systematic Use of the Pentateuch in 1 Corinthians: An Exploratory Survey”, in *The Corinthian Correspondence*, 441-457; taken up again and expanded in IDEM, “1 Corinthians as Systematically Adapting the Pentateuch, Especially Deuteronomy: An Exploratory Survey”, in *The Birthing of the New Testament. The Intertextual Development of the New Testament Writings* (New Testament Monographs 1; Sheffield 2004) 125-137; in the same volume see also the two appendices: “The Use of Daniel in 1 Corinthians: An Exploration”, 595-599; “The Use of Tobit in 1 Corinthians”, 600-604; C.J.A. HICKLING, “Paul’s Use of Exodus in the Corinthian Correspondence”, 367-376; F. WILK, “Isaiah in 1 and 2 Corinthians”, in S. MOYISE – M.J.J. MENKEN (eds.), *Isaiah in the New Testament* (The New Testament and the Scriptures of Israel; London 2005) 133-158.

²¹ T.L. BRODIE, «The Triple Intertextuality of the Epistles: An Introduction», in T.L. BRODIE – D.R. MACDONALD – S.E. PORTER (eds.), *The Intertextuality of the Epistles. Explorations of Theory and Practice* (New Testament Monographs 16; Sheffield 2006) 77.

²² This is Table 6 in BRODIE, “The Systematic Use”, 454-45,5 which I am repeating *non verbatim*. In particular, with respect to the original, I have intervened at several points to correct egregious errors in references to the chapters and verses.

DEUTERONOMY AS A COMPONENT OF 1 CORINTHIANS
AN EXPLORATIVE OUTLINE

<i>Deuteronomy</i>		<i>1 Corinthians</i>	
Ch. 6	Shema (total love).	Cf. Ch. 13?	
Chs. 7+9	The weak; Moses' fears, prayer.	1,25 – 2,5	The weak; Paul's fears.
Ch. 8	Remember the way; like a son.	4,13-21	A son will recall my ways to you.
10,1-11	Tables, ark, Aaron, Levi, Moses.	?	
Chs. 10–11	Shema/love, and the two ways.	Cf. Ch. 13?	
Chs. 12–15	Worship, idols, purity, tithes.	?	
16,1-8	Passover and unleavened bread.	5,6-8	Christ our Passover.
16,9 – 18,8	Feasts; cultic deviations, heads.	?	
18,9-22	Divination, the prophet, lying.	14,20-21	Foreign tongues. Cf. 15,4.12-14 (?).
Cap. 19–23	Revenge, war, fornication.	?	
Cap. 23–28	Protection, 'creed', written law.	9,4-18	Apologia of Paul.
29,1-13	Second covenant — knowing God.	11,23-26	New covenant — in remembrance of me.
	Exod 12–13: Passover lamb and Passover night.		The night, the meal.
	Isaiah 53: the Servant, like a lamb, handed over for our sins.		The handing over. [...for our sins, 15,3]
29,14-29	Warnings.	11,27-34	Warnings.
30,1-10	From scattering to gathering.	Cap. 12	From division to union.
30,11-20	Love, not in heaven; the two ways.	Cap. 13	Love — not angelic tongues.
	The future (30,19-20).		The future of love (13,8-13).
31,1-8	Journeys of Moses and Joshua.	16,1-13	Journeys of Paul and Timothy.
31,9-13	Scripture, reading, teaching.	14,26-40	Teaching, confession, writing.
31,14-22	Descent of God: the curses.	16,21-22	(?) Anathema. Maranatha.
31,23-30	Be a man; gather all together.	14,20-25	Do not be children; all gathered together.
32,1-25	The only God; remember the past generations; Jacob/Israel sacrificed to idols.	10,14-15+	Flee idolatry: consider historical Israel; sacrifices,
		10,22	Idols.
32,26-42	The God of all restrains himself out of love for his people.	10,23-24+	“Everything” is limited because of God and love of the neighbour.
32,43-52	Homage to God. Say everything to all the people of Israel — this is their life.	10,31-33	Glory to God. I seek to be all things to all men — to save them.
Ch. 33	The tribes of Israel: the blessings of God, especially on Levi dedicated to worship, and on glorious Joseph with the crown on his head.	11,2-15	The human race (men and women): the glory of God, especially prayer.
Ch. 34	End of Moses, burial.	15,3-4	The death of Christ, burial.

But the same process is repeated in the comparison between Daniel and 1 Corinthians ²³:

²³ BRODIE, “The Use of Daniel”, in *The Birthing of the New Testament*, 595 (in this case too, errors in the original table have been corrected).

Table 97. *Episodes of contrast and conflict: the judgment of the world*
(*Daniel 1–6; 13,14; 1 Corinthians 1–4*)

	<i>Daniel</i>	<i>1 Corinthians</i>
1. The initial contrast	1,4-21	1,3-21
2. Abusive dinner and new regime	1,1-16; ch. 5	11,17-19
3. The crisis of the mystery and death	2,1-24	2,6-8.10
4. The crisis resolved by the spirit	chs. 4, 5, 13	2,10-16
5. Statues, stones and trial by fire	2,25-35; ch. 3	3,10-15
6. Greatness and kingdom: the share of God	2,36-45; ch. 4	4,6c-8
7. Order in the community	2,46-49; ch. 6, 14	14,25.37

Table 98. *Prophetic visions of the building and the triumph*
(*Daniel 7–12; 1 Corinthians 14–15*)

	<i>Daniel</i>	<i>1 Corinthians</i>
8. Prophecy: the request for interpretation	7,15...8,13; 9,20	14,2-4
9. Building the sanctuary	8,11; 9,2.17.25; 11,31	14,4-5.12b-18
10. Confront sin	ch. 9	15,3b
11. The triumph of one and all	chs. 7, 10–12	15,15b-28
12. The secret	12,5-11	15,35-37

And again in the comparison between the book of Tobit and 1 Corinthians ²⁴:

Table 99. *The story of Tobit*

	<i>Tobit</i>	<i>1 Corinthians</i>
1. The cross and the plan	2,3.6.14; 3,16-17	1,8-21; 2,9
2. Journey and body/marriage	4,19-21; chs. 5–10	4,15-17; chs. 5–7
3. The day of death	4,1-18	15,30-32
4. From death to life: a new creation	11-12	15,35-58
5. Generous journey	1-3	16,1-12
6. The universal house	13-14	16,13-24

²⁴ BRODIE, "The Use of Tobit", in *The Birthing of the New Testament*, 600 (with errors in the original table corrected).

How are we to assess these three proposals of Brodie? In tackling the questions that were being debated at Corinth, has Paul really made such a systematic use not of one but three books of the OT? Do the blessings of Deuteronomy 33 really constitute the background of 1 Cor 11,2-15, with the veil of the women having a connection with Joseph's crown? And has the account of the death of Moses in Deuteronomy really something in common with 1 Corinthians 15, a text wholly centred on the resurrection? Is the common reference to Passover sufficient to hypothesise a phenomenon of citation, allusion and echo between Deuteronomy 16 and 1 Cor 5,6-8? As can easily be seen, the whole thing appears forced.

One has the impression that Brodie wishes to go in search of points of contact at every step even at the cost of forcing an unwarranted interpretation on a passage. Thus, it turns out that some details in the text are expanded in an exaggerated way only because they are useful, while others that are absolutely central are passed over in silence, ignored because they do not fit in with Brodie's aim. But this is not a scientific, serious or rigorous way of proceeding. There are numerous examples which could be adduced to illustrate further this, at times fanciful, aptitude of Brodie. A few examples, however, will suffice. If we turn to chapter 34 of Deuteronomy, it tells of the death and burial of Moses, but there is no link between this episode and 1 Cor 15,3-4 except for the fact that both Moses and Christ died and were buried, hardly something unusual! However, Brodie keeps quiet about the resurrection of Christ in 1 Corinthians 15 only because there is no corresponding event in the story of Moses. But the resurrection is the centre of 1 Corinthians 15, and certainly not the fact that after death Christ was buried in parallel with the serene burial of Moses on Mount Nebo. What does the beginning of Daniel, recounting the episode of the Hebrew youths at the court of Nebuchadnezzar, have in common with the beginning of 1 Corinthians where Paul refers to the internal divisions of the community? Absolutely nothing. And, again, what is there to say about the comparison between the vicissitudes of Tobit described in the first chapter of the book of Tobit and Paul's journey plans in 1 Corinthians 16? In making this comparison, Brodie descends into the ridiculous, and, what is worse, he is heaping discredit on a methodology which, instead, has something really serious to offer.

In fact, it is undeniable that there are various points of contact between Deuteronomy and 1 Corinthians, as we shall have ample means of seeing in what follows, as also between Tobit or Daniel and Paul's letter. Here, we shall adduce one case which can serve as an example. The advice of old Tobit to his son Tobias, as contained in Tobit 4, actually has various

points of contact with some of Paul's statements in 1 Corinthians. Worthy of notice is what Tobit says in Tob 4,12:

Keep yourself, O son, from all fornication (πρόσεχε σεαυτῷ παιδίον ἀπὸ πάσης πορνείας) and first of all take a wife from the race of your ancestors (καὶ γυναῖκα πρῶτον λαβὲ ἀπὸ τοῦ σπέρματος τῶν πατέρων σου); do not take a foreign woman who is not of the tribe of your father, for we are sons of the prophets.

This passages finds an echo in the φεύγετε τὴν πορνείαν of 1 Cor 6,18, and also, with due modifications, in the norms established by Paul in 1 Corinthians 7 in relation to matrimonial discipline. But it is frequently the *humus* of the book of Tobit which reappears in what Paul writes to the Corinthians. In fact, one could also speak of how far the instructions of Tobit concerning almsgiving, contained within the same discourse of Tobit 4, return in the Pauline instruction relating to the collection. But this concerns 2 Corinthians 8–9, and that is another story. In any case, it is noteworthy how many of the OT texts used by Paul in 1 Corinthians later produce their effects in 2 Corinthians too, something which speaks volumes for the unity of the Corinthian correspondence taken as a whole.

In conclusion, the intertextual work carried out by Brodie, although undoubtedly interesting in itself, often turns out to be forced to the point of casting a discrediting shadow on an approach which, if properly conducted, can lead to new insights in biblical exegesis. It remains true, however, that where the presence of Deuteronomy in 1 Corinthians is concerned, Brodie has made some valid observations. The influence of the fifth book of the Pentateuch is, in fact, undeniable, as we shall now seek to demonstrate, though in a manner that is decidedly more nuanced than that of Brodie.

IV. ROSNER (AND AGAIN BRODIE) ON THE INTERTEXTUALITY OF 1 CORINTHIANS 6

Another enthusiast of the intertextual approach applied to 1 Corinthians is Brian S. Rosner, whose works are, however, more prudent than those of Brodie²⁵. For example, with regard to 1 Cor 6,1–11 (recourse to pagan tribunals) Rosner thinks that Paul's background is constituted by the traditions (Deuteronomic but not solely) about Moses establishing judges,

²⁵ For some of the following considerations, see my earlier comments and assessments in P. BASTA, "Questioni morali in 1 Corinti 5–6: le ragioni di una sequenza", in A. PITTA – G. DI PALMA (eds.), *"La parola di Dio non è incatenata"* (2 Tm 2,9). Scritti in onore di Cesare Marcheselli-Casale nel suo 70° compleanno (SRivBib 54; Bologna 2012) 267–292.

to which, however, it is necessary to add the *motif* of the righteous sufferer and that of enjoying a good reputation among foreigners ²⁶. Here is his proposal in summary ²⁷:

MOSES AND PAUL APPOINTING JUDGES. 1 CORINTHIANS 6:1-11	
<p>Are there any among you who, having an issue with another, dare to have themselves judged by the unrighteous¹ instead of the saints? Or do you not know that the saints will judge the world?² And if the world is to be judged by you, are you then incapable of judging trivial things?³ Do you not know that we shall judge the angels?⁴ How much more, then, the things of this life! When, therefore, you have to judge everyday matters³, choose as judges⁵ the most humble members of the church. I say this to make you blush!⁶ Is there no one among you, therefore, who is wise enough⁷ to be able to act as intermediary between (a man) and his brother?⁸ But a brother⁹ is summoned to judgment by his brother, and that before unbelievers! (1-6)</p> <p>Not to mention that it is already a fault for you to have lawsuits with one another!¹⁰ Why do you not rather suffer injustice?¹¹ Why do you not rather allow yourselves to be wronged?¹² But you commit injustice and cause harm, and that to your brothers!⁹ Or do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not deceive yourselves: neither the impure, nor idolaters, nor adulterers,¹³ nor catamites,¹⁴ nor sodomites, nor thieves, nor the greedy, nor drunkards, nor cursers, nor robbers will inherit the kingdom of God. And such were some of you;¹⁵ but you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and in the Spirit of our God! (7-11)</p>	<p>¹ Deut 16,18-20; Exod 23,6-8; Lev 19,15; etc. ² Dan 7,22; Ps 8,5 ³ Exod 21,6 ⁴ Dan 7,18; Ps 8,5 ⁵ Exod 18,14 ⁶ Exod 32,12,25; 1 Kgs 20,28, Isa 52,5; Ezek 36,20; Qoh 7,1, etc.; ⁷ Exod 18,18.19; Deut 1,15 ⁸ Deut 1,16; ⁹ Gen 13,6-13; Ps 133,1 ¹⁰ Ex 18,22 ¹¹ Lev 19,13 ¹² Deut 24,14; 25,1 ¹³ Ex 20,13; Deut 5,17; Lev 20,10 ¹⁴ Lev 18,22; 20,13 ¹⁵ Deut 9,6.24; 32,16 ff; Pss 78; 106 etc</p>

²⁶ ROSNER, *Paul, Scripture*, 94-122.

²⁷ ROSNER, *Paul, Scripture*, 122.

Rosner shrewdly discerns many points of contact. In particular, one notes how in his table Deuteronomy enjoys a certain prominence and rightly so. Especially perspicacious is the textual contact he points out between 1 Cor 6,5 and Deut 1,16:

<i>Deut 1,16</i>	<i>1 Cor 6,5</i>
At that time I charged your judges: “Hear your brothers and judge with justice between a man and his brother (καὶ κρίνατε δικαίως ἀνὰ μέσον ἀνδρὸς καὶ ἀνὰ μέσον ἀδελφοῦ) or the alien”.	I say this to make you blush! Is there no one, therefore, among you who is wise enough (οὕτως οὐκ ἐνὶ ὑμῖν οὐδεὶς σοφός) to be able to act as intermediary between his brothers (διακρίναι ἀνὰ μέσον τοῦ ἀδελφοῦ αὐτοῦ)?

But even more interesting is the wider context of Deut 1,9-18 where Moses, now incapable of administering justice on his own amidst a people that is ever more numerous, asks them to choose wise men from among the tribes to replace him in this duty, as narrated precisely in Deut 1,13:

Take in each one of your tribes men who are wise, shrewd and known (ἀνδρας σοφοὺς καὶ ἐπιστήμονας καὶ συνετούς), so that I may appoint them to be your heads.

But is this not perhaps the same request that Paul presents in 1 Cor 6,5 when, after reproving the Corinthians for their recourse to pagan judges, he exhorts them to have themselves judged by wise men taken from the church, that is, from the same community of faith? In this case, therefore, Paul would have the background of Deut 1,9-18 in mind. This hypothesis is plausible on the situational level, even while it invites further study, given that the exact citation καὶ ἐξαρεῖτε τὸν πονηρὸν ἐξ ὑμῶν αὐτῶν does not in fact appear in this context. For now, we shall content ourselves with having accepted and pointed out with Rosner a real contact.

The same line of intertextuality is followed by Brodie ²⁸, an author who, as we noted above, alternates valuable insights with notable straining of the evidence. The following table constitutes a further example of this:

²⁸ BRODIE, “The Systematic Use”, 450-451. With respect to the original table, in addition to the translation, I have also corrected numerous errors in the verse citations and in the accentuation of Greek words.

DEUTERONOMY 1	1 COR 6,1-11
<i>Avoid judgments before the unrighteous</i>	
	<p>* “...You...are going to judgment (κρίνεσθαι) before the unrighteous (ἀδίκων).</p> <p>+ Do you not know that the saints (ἅγιοι) will judge (κρινούσιν) the world? [= Judgment belongs only to the saints].</p> <p>> If the world (κόσμος) is to be judged (κρίνεται) by you, are you then unworthy of judging trivial things (ἐλαχίστων)?” (6,1-2)</p>
<i>Appoint the wise man...and the judge</i>	
<p>“I cannot (οὐ δυνήσομαι) bear you alone...‘Take from among you wise men (σοφούς)...’. So I took from among you wise men (σοφούς)...and I set them over you (ἐφ’ ὑμῶν) as heads...and instructors for your judges (κριταῖς)” (1,9.12-15).</p>	<p>“Is it possible that there is no one (οὐκ) among you (ἐν ὑμῖν) wise (σοφός) enough to be able (δυνήσεται) to pronounce judgment (διακρίναι)?”</p>
<i>Judgment among brothers</i>	
<p>“I said to the judges: ‘Hear your brothers (ἀνὰ μέσον τῶν ἀδελφῶν) and judge justly (κρίνατε δικαίως) between a man and his brother or the alien that is with him (ἀνὰ μέσον ἀνδρὸς καὶ ἀνὰ μέσον ἀδελφοῦ καὶ ἀνὰ μέσον προσηγλύτου αὐτοῦ)’” (1,16).</p>	<p>“Among your brothers (ἀνὰ μέσον τοῦ ἀδελφοῦ αὐτοῦ),</p> <p>but a brother goes to judgment against his brother (ἀδελφὸς μετὰ ἀδελφοῦ κρίνεται)” (6,5-6).</p>
<i>Avoid unjust judgments</i>	
<p>* “‘You shall not be partial in judgment (ἐν κρίσει) [= Do not judge unjustly].</p> <p>> You shall judge (κρινεῖς) small (μικρόν) and great (μέγαν) alike;</p> <p>+ You shall not fear anyone, for the judgment (κρίσις) belongs to God (θεοῦ)’” (1,17).</p>	
<i>Complete moral defeat</i>	
	<p>“it is a complete failing (ὅλως ἡττημα) for you ... that you commit unrighteousness” (6,7-8)</p>
<i>Inherit the land/kingdom: those who do not...</i>	
<p>“Enter, inherit (κληρονομέω) the land” (1,8).</p>	<p>“Do you not know that the unrighteous (ἄδικοι) will not inherit (κληρονομέω)</p>

DEUTERONOMY 1	1 COR 6,1-11
<i>Inherit the land/kingdom: those who do not...</i>	
“Go up, inherit (κληρονομέω)...You shall not fear ... But you have disobeyed/you have not believed (ἠπειθέω)... The Lord, angered: “You shall not enter...not even (οὐδὲ οὐ) you...” (1,21.26.35.37).	the kingdom of God... Neither... nor... nor... (οὔτε... οὔτε... οὔτε...) will inherit (κληρονομέω) the kingdom of God.” (6,9-10)
<i>...and those</i>	
“Except (πλήν) Caleb...Joshua will inherit it (κληρονομέω), and every new (νέος) child who does not distinguish good and evil...will inherit it (κληρονομέω) ” (1,36.38-39).	“And such were some of you. But (ἀλλά) you were washed...sanctified... justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and through the Spirit...” (6,11)
<i>Moral failure which leads to complete defeat</i>	
““Do not go up... You will be destroyed...”’ But you rebelled there and went up... Then the Amorites came out against you and like a swarm of bees they pursued you and struck you from Sir as far as Hormah” (1,42-44).	

It is not necessary to give a detailed assessment of this table. The serious weaknesses are clearly evident: the citations are completely lacking, and it is difficult to discover most of the allusions or echoes proposed by Brodie, at least from 1 Cor 6,7-8 on. On the other hand, I am quite prepared to recognise some contacts between the textual passage of 1 Cor 6,1-11 and Deuteronomy 1, if only for the reason that, in both cases, the solution of conflicts internal to the community, first of Israel, then of the Corinthian church, have to be entrusted to wise men taken from the same faith community.

As is clear, both Rosner and Brodie are banging on the same drum, and rightly so. At the moment in which Paul finds himself before a concrete difficulty in the Corinthian community, where brothers in the faith are quarrelling, denouncing one another, and entrusting their case to pagan tribunals, he has recourse to the same information provided to him by Deuteronomy 1: judgments must be made by wise men of the community. The circumstances are obviously different. In Deuteronomy 1, in fact, the recourse to wise men taken from the community to administer justice is due to two necessities: Moses is now old, and the people have become numerous. At Corinth, on the other hand, the motive is totally different: quarrelling among brothers is already shameful; to have recourse to people

outside the Christian community to settle the disputes is still worse because matters are being entrusted not to the saints but to the unrighteous, not to the faithful but to unbelievers. For the present argument, however, it is sufficient to note how Paul, when faced with a concrete case occurring at Corinth, takes a decision which is in perfect harmony with the solution adopted by Moses in Deut 1,13: to choose from within the group wise, intelligent and respected men who could resolve the possible judicial cases which may arise between the brothers.

Thus, there exists a common background between 1 Cor 6,1-11 and Deut 1,9-18. The fact is undisputed and certain, and each one can easily verify it for himself. However, the contacts between 1 Corinthians 5–7 and the book of Deuteronomy by no means finish here. On the contrary, in addition to the same background, in 1 Cor 5,13b there appears, as already pointed out, a citation that is as explicit as it is indisputable: καὶ ἐξαρεῖτε τὸν πονηρὸν ἐξ ὑμῶν αὐτῶν. The study of this *verbatim* repetition of Deuteronomy will lead us much further than the conclusions reached by Rosner or Brodie.

V. THE CITATION OF 1 COR 5,13: WHAT TEXT OF DEUTERONOMY?

In 1 Cor 5,1-13, the apostle tackles the question of a person committing incest, a man of the community who is living with the wife of his father and so, in practice, with his own stepmother. Paul’s decision in this regard is given in no uncertain terms: the man is to be handed over to Satan, that is to say, excluded from the community with a therapeutic intention. This individual was to be separated from the church so that he could experience the destruction of his flesh, that is, of his weakness, so that his spirit could gain the benefit from this. At the conclusion of a harsh reprimand, motivated by the fact that some Corinthians did not take this situation very seriously, the apostle seals his whole argument with the explicit citation from Deuteronomy: “Put away the wicked man from among you” (καὶ ἐξαρεῖτε τὸν πονηρὸν ἐξ ὑμῶν αὐτῶν).

But what is the passage from Deuteronomy being invoked by Paul? In fact, rather than a single verse, this is a real leitmotiv in the entire book of Deuteronomy (known by the name of the *bi’artā* formula²⁹), where the

²⁹ For attempts to attain greater precision in studies relating to the *bi’artā* formula of Deuteronomy, see J. DIETRICH, *Kollektive Schuld und Haftung*. Religions- und rechtsgeschichtliche Studien zum Sündenkuhritus des Deuteronomiums und zu verwandten Texten (ORA 4; Tübingen 2010) 72 n. 7, 87, 362-370; T. HIEKE, “Das Alte Testament und die Todesstrafe”, *Bib* 85 (2004) 349-374.

text that Paul quotes recurs in no less than nine passages (six if one excludes Deut 17,12 and Deut 22,22, where ἐξ ὑμῶν αὐτῶν is replaced by ἐξ Ἰσραηλ, and Deut 13,6, where the usual ἐξαρεῖτε is replaced by the rarer ἀφανιεῖς):

DEUTERONOMY	LEITMOTIV
13,6*	καὶ ἀφανιεῖς τὸν πονηρὸν ἐξ ὑμῶν αὐτῶν
17,7	καὶ ἐξαρεῖς τὸν πονηρὸν ἐξ ὑμῶν αὐτῶν
17,12	καὶ ἐξαρεῖς τὸν πονηρὸν ἐξ Ἰσραηλ
19,19	καὶ ἐξαρεῖς τὸν πονηρὸν ἐξ ὑμῶν αὐτῶν
21,21	καὶ ἐξαρεῖς τὸν πονηρὸν ἐξ ὑμῶν αὐτῶν
22,21	καὶ ἐξαρεῖς τὸν πονηρὸν ἐξ ὑμῶν αὐτῶν
22,22	καὶ ἐξαρεῖς τὸν πονηρὸν ἐξ Ἰσραηλ
22,24	καὶ ἐξαρεῖς τὸν πονηρὸν ἐξ ὑμῶν αὐτῶν
24,7	καὶ ἐξαρεῖς τὸν πονηρὸν ἐξ ὑμῶν αὐτῶν.

The table below presenting the Hebrew texts confirms the data of the LXX with a single exception. In Hebrew we always find ובערת which in LXX 13,6 is rendered with καὶ ἀφανιεῖς instead of the usual καὶ ἐξαρεῖς:

DEUTERONOMY	LEITMOTIV
13,6	ובערת הרע מקרבך
17,7	ובערת הרע מקרבך
17,12	ובערת הרע מישראל
19,19	ובערת הרע מקרבך
21,21	ובערת הרע מקרבך
22,21	ובערת הרע מקרבך
22,22	ובערת הרע מישראל
22,24	ובערת הרע מקרבך
24,7	ובערת הרע מקרבך

There is much discussion among commentators about whether Paul had in mind one of these nine passages or whether the reference is vague. The main proposals are the following:

- the majority of scholars opt for Deut 17,7 which Paul would be citing exactly according to the LXX ³⁰;
- Collins claims that the passage quoted in 1 Cor 5,13 corresponds to Deut 22,21 but without giving a convincing explanation ³¹;
- some have proposed a citation of Deut 13,6, but in a wholly illogical way ³²;
- finally, there are those who, in a rather Solomonic manner, hypothesise Pauline recourse not to a single case but to the entire series ³³.

How shall we proceed? The exclusion of Deut 13,6 seems to me the most logical for at least two reasons. First of all, the identity is only partial, as already pointed out above (ἐξαρεῖτε *versus* ἀφανιεῖς). But this is the lesser reason, seeing that the Pauline citations of the LXX do not stand out for their accuracy. More problematic is the analysis of the context of Deut 13,6:

This prophet or dreamer will die because he has taught a defection from the Lord your God who brought you out of the land of Egypt and freed you from the house of slavery to drag you out of the path on which the Lord your God has commanded you to walk. Thus you will destroy the wicked man from the midst of you (καὶ ἀφανιεῖς τὸν πονηρὸν ἐξ ὑμῶν αὐτῶν).

Now, between the case of the incestuous man in 1 Corinthians 5 and the directives of Deuteronomy 13 concerning sanctions to be inflicted on the prophet or dreamer who encourages the people towards foreign divinities there do not seem to be too many analogies unless in showing that, in both situations, we are dealing with offensive acts which expose the entire community to great danger. But the contact is too feeble if one considers the logic of Paul's use of the texts of the OT at the moment when he analyses them in the light of the difficulties which have to be confronted

³⁰ This would be the passage cited according to H.-D. WENDLAND, *Die Briefe an die Korinther* (Göttingen 1968) 92; H. CONZELMANN, *1 Corinthians. A Commentary on the First Epistle to the Corinthians* (Hermeneia; Philadelphia, PA 1975) 102 n. 85; G.D. FEE, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians* (NICNT; Grand Rapids, MI 1987) 227; F. LANG, *Die Briefe an die Korinther* (Göttingen 1986, ²1994) 104; R. FABRIS, *Prima lettera ai Corinzi* (LBNT 7; Milano 1999) 81 n. 6; G. BARBAGLIO, *La Prima Lettera ai Corinzi* (Bologna 1995) 284.

³¹ Deut 22,21 would be the passage cited in 1 Cor 5,13 according to R. COLLINS, *First Corinthians* (SP 7; Collegeville, MN 1999) 223.

³² This is the case with the Italian translation of the Bible (CEI) in its marginal references.

³³ The entire list of the occurrences in Deuteronomy is referred to as background by D.E. GARLAND, *First Corinthians* (BECNT; Grand Rapids, MI 2003) 191; C.S. KEENER, *1–2 Corinthians* (NCBC; Cambridge 2005) 51; J.A. FITZMYER, *First Corinthians. A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (AB 32; London – New Haven, CT 2008) 245.

within his young churches. In fact, the apostle loves to enter into relation not so much with the small phrase or the exact quotation but rather with the biblical passages themselves, their settings and their textual territories ³⁴. It is in this direction that it is necessary to dig deeper. For example, in our case, we cannot help noting that the three emphatic cases of the *bi'artā* formula, in Deut 22,21.22.24, fall within a context which speaks of fiancées, young women and the way of behaving with them. But this is precisely the theme of 1 Corinthians 7! Thus, it becomes necessary to broaden the examination not to the exact location of the Pauline citation in 1 Cor 5,13, but to the broader contexts of Deuteronomy in which καὶ ἐξαρεῖτε τὸν πονηρὸν ἐξ ὑμῶν αὐτῶν falls to see if it is precisely these which have a greater relevance to the ethical path which the apostle wishes the Corinthian community to follow.

VI. IS 1 COR 5,13 CITING DEUT 17,7?

Now, we have already excluded Deut 13,6, a text in which καὶ ἀφανιεῖς τὸν πονηρὸν ἐξ ὑμῶν αὐτῶν falls in a context of war against idolatry, something which has nothing in common with 1 Cor 5,1-13. A further argument in this direction is the noticeable change of verb: ἐξαρεῖτε *versus* ἀφανιεῖς. Consequently, all those who, like the Italian CEI Bible, read 1 Cor 5,13 with Deut 13,6 are mistaken ³⁵.

We shall now analyse Deut 17,7, a verse preferred by many excellent commentators, given that the citation of καὶ ἐξαρεῖς τὸν πονηρὸν ἐξ ὑμῶν αὐτῶν is perfectly identical. But that is not all. The thematic context lends itself to various contacts, given that both in Deuteronomy 17 and in 1 Corinthians 5–6 it seems that the same problems are being tackled.

In this connection, McDonough was the first — as far as I am aware — to discover a certain relation between the order in which the questions fall in Deut 17,1-8.9-13 and 1 Corinthians 5–6 ³⁶:

³⁴ On the importance which contexts assume within the Pauline citations of the OT, see P. BASTA, *Gezerah Shawah*. Storia, forme e metodi dell'analogia biblica (SubBi 26; Roma 2006).

³⁵ The examination of this case makes it clear that the compilers of the marginal references in the modern translations of the Bible do not always take into due account the contributions which come from the best studies and commentaries. Obviously the operations of intertextuality are thoroughly complex, and not a single person or a small group are sufficient to exhaust the totality of the data. However, it is interesting simply to note the phenomenon here.

³⁶ See S.M. McDONOUGH, "Competent to Judge: the Old Testament Connection between 1 Corinthians 5 and 6", *JTS* 56 (2005) 99-102. With the two tables that follow, I intend to reproduce in a summary and easily visible manner the results reached by this author in his article.

DEUT 17,1-8,9-13	1 CORINTHIANS 5–6
A. DEVIATIONS IN THE CULT	A. THE INCESTUOUS MAN
<p>Dt 17,1 You shall not sacrifice to the Lord your God a head of cattle, large or small, which has a defect or any blemish because this is an abomination to the Lord your God. 17,2 If there is found among you, in one of your towns which the Lord your God gives you, a man or a woman who does what is evil in the eyes of the Lord your God, transgressing his covenant, 17,3 who goes to serve other gods and bows down before them, the sun, the moon or the whole host of heaven, something which I have not commanded; 17,4 if it is told to you and you have heard speak of it, have investigated it and ascertained that the thing is true, namely that this abomination has been performed in Israel, 17,5 you shall cause to be brought forth to the gates of your town that man or that woman who has performed this wicked action, and they shall stone that man or that woman so that they die. 17,6 A condemned man will be put to death on the word of two or three witnesses; he will not be put to death on the evidence of a single witness. 17,7 The hand of the witnesses will be the first against him to kill him, then the hand of all the people. You shall put away the evil from among you (καὶ ἐξαρεῖς τὸν πονηρὸν ἐξ ὑμῶν αὐτῶν).</p>	<p>1 Cor 5,2b let the one who has performed such an action be removed from your midst (ἵνα ἐξαρθῇ ἐκ μέσου ὑμῶν ὁ τὸ ἔργον τοῦτο ποιήσας). 1 Cor 5,13 God will judge those from outside. Put away that perverse one from among you (καὶ ἐξαρεῖτε τὸν πονηρὸν ἐξ ὑμῶν αὐτῶν).</p>
B. LEVITICAL JUDGES	B. APPEAL TO PAGAN TRIBUNALS
<p>Dt 17,8 If a case of judgment between blood and blood, between right and right, between blow and blow, a question of disputes in your city is too difficult for you, then you will arise and go up to the place which the Lord your God will choose (εἰς τὸν τόπον ὃν ἂν ἐκλέξηται κύριος ὁ θεός σου ἐπικληθῆναι τὸ ὄνομα αὐτοῦ ἐκεῖ)</p>	<p>1 Cor 6,1 Is there one among you who, having a dispute with another has dared to let himself be judged by the unrighteous instead of by the saints? [1 Cor 5,4 in the name of our Lord Jesus (ἐν τῷ ὀνόματι τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ χριστοῦ), when you are assembled together, my spirit and the power of our Lord Jesus, 1 Cor 3,16 Do you not know that you are the temple of God (οὐκ οἴδατε ὅτι ναὸς θεοῦ ἐστε) and that the Spirit of God dwells in you?]</p>

DEUT 17,1-8,9-13	1 CORINTHIANS 5–6
B. LEVITICAL JUDGES	B. APPEAL TO PAGAN TRIBUNALS
<p>17,9 and you shall go to the levitical priests and the judge who is in office in those days. They will investigate and convey to you the terms of their decision. 17,10 Then you shall do according to the terms which they have indicated to you in the place which the Lord will choose; you will be careful to act according to their instructions. 17,11 You will act according to the instructions which they have conveyed to you and the decision which they pronounce without deviating either to the right or to the left from the decision which they indicate to you. 17,12 The man who acts presumptuously and without listening to the priest who stands there to serve the Lord your God, or the judge, this man will die. You shall put away the evil from Israel (καὶ ἐξαρεῖς τὸν πονηρὸν ἐξ Ἰσραηλ). 17,13 All the people will see it and know, they will fear it and no longer act with presumption.</p>	<p>1 Cor 6,19 Or do you not know that your body is a sanctuary of the Holy Spirit which is in you (Ἡ οὐκ οἴδατε ὅτι τὸ σῶμα ὑμῶν ναὸς τοῦ ἐν ὑμῖν ἁγίου πνεύματος ἐστίν), which you have from God and that you do not belong to yourselves?</p>

After having also pointed out some other contacts, rather tenuous if the truth be told (as, for example, Deut 17,8 and 1 Cor 5,4; 3,16; 6,19), McDonough concludes that Paul structured the entire discussion of 1 Corinthians 5–6 in the light of Deuteronomy 17 according to this arrangement:

- Deut 17,2-7→ 1 Cor 5

As in Israel, so in Corinth, the grave sins must be treated by removing the transgressors from the community.
- Deut 17,8-13→ 1 Cor 6

In the same way, difficult cases of a various nature in the area of disputes and judgments

which arise in the community of the new covenant must be treated as already happened of old. But with some crucial differences:

a – while under the Sinai covenant some cases had to be brought for judgment to the temple, where the name of God was, under the new covenant this need disappears;

b – the Corinthians in fact are the temple of God in that they are the place where God has chosen to place his name;

c – consequently, they are without excuse when they do not manage to establish agreement among themselves and so resort to pagan judges to resolve their questions;

d – finally, the miserable failure of the judgments among the Corinthians requires that they are still needing to be filled by the Spirit ³⁷.

Perhaps McDonough's conclusions go rather beyond what can be reasonably stated on the basis of the contacts between 1 Corinthians 5–6 and Deut 17,2-13. It remains true, however, that the provision of Deut 17,7, which Paul would refer to in 1 Cor 5,13, is followed in Deut 17,8-13 by the examination of the disputes among Israelites with the direction of the recourse to the Levites as judges appointed by the community to handle matters internal to the people of Israel. But this is very close to the very question tackled by the apostle in the continuation of his ethical instructions in 1 Cor 6,1-11. With the support of this consideration, it could therefore be claimed with good reason that, at the moment when he tackles both the case of incest and the appeal to pagan tribunals, Paul has in mind the entire context of Deut 17,1-13. But the surprises do not end here.

VII. 1 COR 5,13 AND THE OTHER OCCURRENCES OF THE *BI'ARTĀ* FORMULA IN DEUTERONOMY

A good methodological rule which is valid for the examination of Paul's recourse to the OT is never to limit oneself to the exact citation but rather to prefer the constant widening of the investigation to the broader Old Testament context. In fact, by analysing the passages of

³⁷ See McDONOUGH, “Competent to Judge”, 101.

Deuteronomy in which only one of the nine occurrences relating to the removal of the wicked man from the community fall, as in the case of Deut 17,7 (καὶ ἐξαρεῖτε τὸν πονηρὸν ἐξ ὑμῶν αὐτῶν), we are immediately made aware that this citation not only concerns the case of incest (1 Corinthians 5), but also affects the appeal to pagan tribunals (1 Cor 6,1-12), not as practice, let us be clear, but only as contact.

However, if the commentaries focus on simply marking the presence of a citation of Deut 17,7 in 1 Cor 5,13, none of them seems interested in going on to study the question further. Why, for example, think only of Deut 17,7, or why immediately exclude Deut 13,6, without a careful investigation of the contexts of the other seven occurrences of the *bi'artā* formula? After all, there is no lack of appealing invitations to examine all the contexts depicted in Deuteronomy in which expulsion from the community is prescribed ³⁸.

We shall try, then, to make a rapid survey of these further seven occurrences to verify if they too have some contact with the difficulties which Paul is tackling within the young Corinthian church.

1. In Deut 19,19, the *bi'artā* formula falls within the unit of 19,15-20, which is entirely devoted again to tribunal questions (even if more focused on the matter of the number of valid witnesses in a trial and their possible false testimony). Once again, we find ourselves in the same judicial environment as 1 Cor 6,1-11, with its examination of the appeal to pagan tribunals.
2. In Deut 21,21, the *bi'artā* formula falls within the context relating to the stubborn son who disobeys his father and his mother, something which recalls once again 1 Cor 5,1-13 with its ruling about the case of incest. It follows that at the moment when the apostle calls for the man's exclusion from the community, he could also have in mind this context which is much more appropriate to the incestuous man than Deut 17,2-7, a passage which, for its part, has instead a direct link with the tribunal questions common to Deut 17,8-13 and 1 Cor 6,1-11.
3. But still more interesting are the three occurrences of καὶ ἐξαρεῖς τὸν πονηρὸν ἐξ ὑμῶν αὐτῶν in Deut 22,21.22.24, present this time in a context which speaks of young women, virgins who are betrothed and not, and the way in which to behave with them. This recalls the

³⁸ In some respects, this invitation is made but not acted upon with a corresponding analysis in the following studies: P. ELLINGWORTH – H. HATTON, *A Translator's Handbook on Paul's First Letter to the Corinthians* (London – New York – Stuttgart 1985) 105; R.B. HAYS, *First Corinthians*. Interpretation (Louisville, KY 1997) 88; GARLAND, *1 Corinthians*, 189.

questions tackled by Paul in 1 Corinthians 7 where, not by chance, the apostle goes on to examine the so-called states of life with especial attention to matrimonial practices and to the situation of virgins betrothed and not betrothed. The closeness of the case law dealt with both in Deut 22,13 – 23,1 and in 1 Corinthians 7 cannot be easily missed:

<i>Deut 22,13 – 23,1</i>	<i>1 Corinthians 7</i>
<p>Dt 22,13 If a man marries a woman (ἐὰν δέ τις λάβῃ γυναῖκα), goes to her and then hates her, 22,14 accuses her of faults and brings an evil reputation on her saying: “I married this woman, I came near to her, but I did not find in her the tokens of virginity”, 22,15 the father and the mother of the young woman will take the signs of the young woman’s virginity, bring them to the elders at the gate of the city, 22,16 and the father will say to the elders: “I gave my daughter to this man as wife, but he has hated her, 22,17 and behold he has accused her of faults, saying: «I did not find in your daughter the tokens of virginity». These are the tokens of my daughter’s virginity”, and they shall spread the garment before the elders of the city. 22,18 The elders of that city will take the man, chastise him, 22,19 fine him a hundred shekels of silver and give them to the father of the young woman because he has brought an evil reputation on a virgin of Israel. She shall remain his wife and he can never repudiate her again. 22,20 But if the fact is true and the tokens of the young woman’s virginity are not found, 22,21 they shall lead the young woman to the gate of her father’s house, and the men of her city shall stone her and she shall die, because she has committed a shameful thing in Israel by profaning the house of her father. You shall put away the evil from the midst of you (καὶ ἐξαρεῖς τὸν πονηρὸν ἐξ ὑμῶν αὐτῶν).</p>	<p>1 Cor 7,10: To the married I lay down (Τοῖς δὲ γεγαμηκόσιν παραγέλλω)...</p>

<i>Deut 22,13 – 23,1</i>	<i>1 Corinthians 7</i>
<p>22,22 If a man is found lying with a <u>married woman</u> (μετὰ γυναικὸς συνφικισμένης ἀνδρί), both of them shall die, the man lying with the woman and the woman. You shall put away the evil from Israel (καὶ ἐξαρεῖς τὸν πονηρὸν ἐξ Ἰσραηλ).</p> <p>22,23 If a <u>young virgin</u> is betrothed to a man (ἐὰν δὲ γένηται παῖς παρθένος μεμνηστευμένη ἀνδρί), and another man finds her in the city and lies with her, 22,24 you shall bring them both out to the gate of that city and stone them; they shall die, the young woman because she has not cried out in the city, the man because he has violated the wife of his neighbour. You shall put away the evil from the midst of you (καὶ ἐξαρεῖς τὸν πονηρὸν ἐξ ὑμῶν αὐτῶν).</p> <p>22,25 But if the man finds the <u>betrothed young woman</u> in the countryside, seizes her and lies with her, the man who has lain with her shall die, 22,26 while you shall not do anything to the young woman; for the young woman there is no sin that deserves death; it is like when a man attacks his neighbour and kills him, so it is in this case: 22,27 since she was in the country, perhaps the betrothed young woman cried out but no one heard her.</p> <p>22,28 If a man finds a <u>young virgin who is not betrothed</u> (τὴν παῖδα τὴν παρθένον ἣτις οὐ μεμνήστυται), takes her, lies with her and they are caught in the act, 22,29 the man who has lain with her shall give to the young woman's father fifty shekels of silver and she shall be his wife; since he has violated her, it will never be licit for him to repudiate her.</p> <p>23,1 A man shall not marry a wife of his father (οὐ λήμψεται ἄνθρωπος τὴν γυναῖκα τοῦ πατρὸς αὐτοῦ) and he shall not uncover the edge of his father's garment.</p>	<p>1 Cor 7,36: However, if someone holds that he is not behaving himself properly <u>towards his virgin</u> (Εἰ δέ τις ἀσχημονεῖν ἐπὶ τὴν παρθένον αὐτοῦ νομίζει)... [1 Cor 7,36-38 deals with the theme of <u>betrothed virgins</u>]</p> <p>1 Cor 7,25: As for the <u>virgins</u> (Περὶ δὲ τῶν παρθένων), I have no commandment from the Lord... [1 Cor 7,25-28 tackles the theme of virgins with particular reference to those who are <u>not betrothed</u>].</p> <p>1 Cor 5,1: It is said everywhere that there is immorality among you...to the point that one is living with the wife of his father (ὥστε γυναῖκά τινα τοῦ πατρὸς ἔχειν).</p>

What are we to think? Although with a difference in the solutions offered, both Deut 22,13-29 and 1 Corinthians 7 are concerned with questions of proper conduct in relation to three categories of women: the married woman, the betrothed virgin, and the virgin who is not betrothed. Of no less importance, Deut 22,13-29 is followed immediately in Deut 23,1 by the law that prohibits a man from marrying his father’s wife, once again the case of incest in 1 Cor 5,1-13. This last verse of Deuteronomy does not employ the *bi’artā* formula which is recalled and adapted by Paul for his case of incest, but it is the only case within Deuteronomy which speaks explicitly of an incestuous man. At this point, we can already hazard a first conclusion. At the moment when the apostle is legislating over the need to expel the incestuous man, he has in mind not so much an exact text as rather a spectrum of texts and contexts in Deuteronomy which inspire him when he offers to the Corinthians possible paths to follow in the face of such moral difficulties. It follows that Paul is applying the exclusion formula only to the incestuous man, not holding it suitable for those who resort to pagan tribunals (1 Cor 6,1-11) or to the various situations of matrimonial practice (1 Corinthians 7). The latter are cases which have only a situational relationship but which in detail are very distant from one another both for the gravity of the difficulty being tackled and for the halakhic norm which derives from it.

4. The final occurrence of the *bi’artā* formula is found in Deut 24,7, a passage that concerns the theft of brothers:

<i>Deut 24,7</i>	<i>1 Cor 6,1-11</i>
If a man is surprised stealing one of his brothers (κλέπτων ψυχὴν τῶν ἀδελφῶν αὐτοῦ) among the sons of Israel, if he enslaves him or sells him, that thief shall die. You shall put away the evil from amidst you (καὶ ἐξαρεῖς τὸν πονηρὸν ἐξ ὑμῶν αὐτῶν).	1 Cor 6,8: You yourselves, instead, harm and defraud, and this in dealing with your brothers (καὶ τοῦτο ἀδελφούς) 1 Cor 6,10: ...neither catamites, nor sodomites, nor thieves (οὔτε κλέπται), nor the greedy, nor drunkards, nor cursers, nor robbers shall enter the kingdom of God.

Here the contacts are more ephemeral and can be classified on the level of vague allusion or, even better, of distant echo. Nevertheless, one cannot help noting that the appeal to the pagan tribunals in 1 Cor 6,1-11 is very emphatic on the absolute need not to defraud one’s brothers. Once again, the wide contexts of Deuteronomy in which the καὶ ἐξαρεῖς τὸν πονηρὸν ἐξ ὑμῶν αὐτῶν falls are surely present in the mind of the Paul in 1 Corinthians 5–7.

VIII. CONCLUSIONS

At the end of our analysis, different conclusions come to the fore. Some are of a methodological character, while others are more bound up with the content.

Where method is concerned, we can note that *the OT presents Paul with an absolute point of reference with which to interpret the present*. Some real situations which arose in Corinth and which were considered by him in 1 Corinthians 5–7 are retrojected into the OT in the search for analogies, simple connection or similarity of circumstance, such as to offer a secure anchor for the reply that is to be offered within a concrete situation. The apostle notes that some of the moral difficulties which are arising at Corinth — incest, appeals to pagan tribunals, and matrimonial questions — had already been dealt with in the case law of Deuteronomy. Consequently, he deems that he should look at such contingent situations in the light of what was already expressed in the OT, in a work of re-presentation and adaptation which is typical of Jewish *midrash*. After all, the method of continual halakhic adaptation was widely practiced within the contemporary rabbinic world. So, for the similar circumstances which had arisen at Corinth, the apostle, as a good halakhist, follows the example of what had already been sanctioned within the book of Deuteronomy, though with the necessary distinctions.

Still on the methodological level, it is important to recall, once again, that, more than the exact citation of a single verse, *it is always very useful to broaden the study to the wider contexts in which the same fragment occurs*. The exegetical discoveries and surprises are round the corner. As a very fine expert in the sacred scriptures, Paul, and many other Christian authors of the early period, considered not only the verse that they were citing, but also, and with even greater attention, the larger textual passage which they were drawing from in a continual work of revisiting biblical texts and adapting them to new situations. Consequently, it is possible to state without hesitation that when Paul writes 1 Corinthians 5–7 he actually has in mind not only the phrase of Deuteronomy which he cites in 1 Cor 5,13 (καὶ ἐξαρεῖτε τὸν πονηρὸν ἐξ ὑμῶν αὐτῶν) but also the broader context in which this real deuteronomistic leitmotiv falls, i.e., within those sections of the last book of the Torah where there is ample space devoted to questions that were, if not identical, at least very similar to those which were being aired within the young Corinthian community and in response to which the apostle felt he had to intervene.

But, as we have shown up to now, if the apostle is reflecting in 1 Corinthians 5–7 on the texts of Deuteronomy which have the same

formula of exclusion from the community, it follows that there are important arguments in favor of the redactional unity of 1 Corinthians 5–7 which some unduly take apart ³⁹. The fact that all the questions tackled by Paul in 1 Corinthians 5–7 return to Deuteronomic contexts bound up contextually with the *bi'artā* formula becomes, *vice versa*, a strong argument for the sequence of 1 Corinthians 5–6 + 1 Corinthians 7. So much for the methodological considerations.

It is possible also, however, to draw various interesting conclusions on the level of content. One of Paul's pressing concerns in his dealings with the Corinthian community is the need for a young church to maintain a high level of morality when it is easily exposed to the winds of the pagan culture in which it was immersed. But is this not perhaps the same concern of the book of Deuteronomy when, in order to protect the holiness of the people of Israel, it has recourse to the apodictic law of exclusion from the community? Does not the author of Deuteronomy also wish to strengthen the very identity of the people of God, defending it in every way from idolatry, perversions and sins against the community?

Obviously, the exclusion from the community is clearly limited in 1 Corinthians 5–7 compared with the much wider deuteronomistic case law, being limited only to incest and in a manner which intends only to strike the flesh but certainly not the spirit (therapeutic exclusion). Yet nevertheless, beyond the different legislation and beyond the different motivation, the concern with identity is the same: maintaining the high moral level of the two congregations.

Last but not least, the detailed study of 1 Corinthians 5–7 with reference to the *bi'artā* formula of Deuteronomy is a good indication that Paul does not have recourse to the OT only in doctrinal contexts such as that of justification by faith alone or the extension of the family of Abraham with the connected problem of circumcision, but also in areas that are clearly ethical. In this connection, the OT remains for him an inescapable point of reference to be consulted, meditated on again and re-presented whenever the scriptures of Israel can direct, guide and nourish the young Christian communities.

Pontificia Università Urbaniana
Via Urbano VIII, 16
I-00165 Roma

Pasquale BASTA

³⁹ See, among many, G. SELLIN, “Hauptprobleme des Ersten Korintherbriefes”, *ANRW* II, 25.4 (Berlin – New York 1987) 2965-2967; FEE, *The First Epistle*, 6-10, 266; FITZMYER, *First Corinthians*, 56-57. For a survey of the positions with regard to the various hypotheses on the compilation of 1 Corinthians, see CONZELMANN, *1 Corinthians*, 3-4; BARBAGLIO, *La Prima Lettera*, 44-49.

SUMMARY

In Paul's letters not only extensive phenomena of quotation appear, but also the presence of OT motifs are echoed. This is the case in 1 Cor 5,13, with the explicit citation: "Put away the wicked man from among you". Rather than a single verse, this apodictic order is a leitmotiv of Deuteronomy (known as *bi'artā* formula), where it recurs in nine passages. Some moral difficulties arising at Corinth — incest, appeals to pagan tribunals, and matrimonial questions — had already been dealt with in the case law of Deuteronomy. Consequently, the apostle looks at such contingent situations in the light of the OT, in a work of a good halakhic re-presentation and adaptation: in similar circumstances, the young Corinthian church has to follow the example of what had already been sanctioned within Deuteronomy, though with the due distinctions.

RECENSIONES

Please address all books for review and related correspondence to:
Editorial Office, *Biblica*, Pontificio Istituto Biblico, Piazza della Pilotta 35, I-00187 Roma.

Vetus Testamentum

José Luis SICRE DÍAZ, *Jueces* (NBE). Estella, Verbo Divino, 2018. 607 p. 16 × 24. €50,00

This commentary on the book of Judges should serve as another reminder of the scholarly importance of Spanish-language biblical research. Among the particular readers Sicre Díaz has in view for this commentary are scholars versed in historical criticism and redaction criticism. Additionally, his book also attends to interpretive issues that would indeed be of interest to literary critics, textual critics, feminist critics, and biblical theologians. Relying mainly on biblical scholarship written in German and English, Sicre Díaz opens his commentary with an extensive introductory discussion on the structure, religious-theology (*religioso-teológico*), and textual formation of Judges. In terms of his book's structure, Sicre Díaz easily divides Judges into three major parts, 1) Introduction (1,1–3,6); 2) History of Judges (3,7 – 16,31); 3) the Decline (17–21), which is a division scheme that is common in most modern Western commentaries (19th-21st centuries).

For Sicre Díaz, the overarching religious-political message of Judges is that no system of government, neither judicial nor monarchical, guarantees well-being and peace. As he writes, it is “only the faithfulness to God (*solo la fidelidad a Dios*)” (55). Not uniform in Sicre Díaz's view are the interpretations that different readers may have of this message — depending on their vantage point. As he explains at the end of the book, for readers focusing solely on the book of Judges, it becomes clear that the judicial system has gone from bad to worse. Moreover, when there is neither a judge nor a king, it is “fatal” (494). Yet for those reading Judges within the context of the first prophets (Joshua–2 Kings) or the grand history of Israel (Genesis–2Kings), they are likely to conclude that the king needed is David and his eternal dynasty.

In dating Judges, he follows the scholarship of Walter Gross and Yaira Amit and hence argues that the book had a very late formation. He accepts the notion that its redaction began at the end of the 8th century, which was several centuries after the book's imagined historical context. Within this historical spectrum, Sicre Díaz argues that readers contemporary with the reign of Josiah likely would have had an optimistic view of the monarchy and the divine promise to David. Yet for Babylonian exilic readers, they likely had a negative view of the monarchy, blaming the kings for their captivity (494).

In his first major section entitled “*La decadencia progresiva del pueblo* (1,1 – 3,6)”, Sicre Díaz is concerned primarily with historical-critical issues within the text, which is repeated in the other two major sections of the book. Based on his own translation of the Masoretic Text, Sicre Díaz’s commentary generally moves from textual critical concerns to redaction history, then to biblical geography, and finally to his commentary on individual passages. Often this trajectory leads Sicre Díaz to what may be regarded as his book’s most interesting contribution, and that is his commentary on the religious-theological message of Judges. Despite the historical discrepancies in the book, which Sicre Díaz meticulously identifies, the purpose and function of Judges are not historical concerns but rather religious tradition, which as he argues is often missed in other commentaries. Similar to G.W. Trompf, Sicre Díaz identifies a quartet-scheme to Judges’ religious-theology: sin-punishment-clamor-salvation (144).

The second major section, “*La decadencia progresiva de los jueces* (3,7 – 16,31)”, contains the bulk of the book’s commentary material, from Othniel to the minor judges to finally Samson. At times, Sicre Díaz’s summaries of the various scholarly arguments regarding the text’s historical context and redaction history outweigh his original commentary on Judges. Such a strategy perhaps reflects more the gravitational pull of Western historical criticism in the guild, particularly in Europe, such that scholarly innovation must negotiate between originality and the reigning authorities in the discourse. Yet when Sicre Díaz does offer original commentary, it is indeed insightful, perceptive, and creative. Among Sicre Díaz’s original contributions are his intertextual/canonical readings of Judges, which are a staple feature of his lexicographic studies after each translated section. As for the particularities of this reading strategy in his commentary, the section on Deborah and Barak (4–5) shows its value. Here he catalogues clearly the differences between the prose version of Deborah and Barak in chapter 4 and their lyrical poetic version in chapter 5, with the most notable being that the latter elaborates further on the action of God (*teofanía*, cf. heaven and earth in Ps 68,92; 2 Sam 22,8-9; mountains in Mic 1,3; Pss 97,5, 144,5) and people groups (186-191; 225-226). For Sicre Díaz, reading across the canon intertextually not only reveals the development of deuteronomistic theology like divine retribution and idol worship but also provides support to his arguments on the scribal development of Judges. In the instance of the prose and poetic versions of Deborah and Barak (4–5), their differences — as revealed through his intertextual reading — logically mark chapter 5 as the older text. As he argues, it was composed for an audience who had witnessed the events told in the song or had at least heard about them. In terms of the prose version in chapter 4, Sicre Díaz concludes that it was based on a completely different oral tradition (191). Finally, the Samson cycle is another noteworthy section where his intertextual reading enriches his commentary of Judges, particularly chapter 13.

For the final section, “*El hundimiento* (17–21)”, Sicre Díaz divides it into two parts: 1) The Sanctuary of Dan, Fruit of the Eight Sins (17–18); 2) The Crime of Gibeah and its Consequences (19–21). For the first part, Sicre Díaz rightly emphasizes its Yahwist character and argues that these chapters were likely edited by an ancient Jewish author who was not very pro-Levite and not very ethnocentric (506-507). The phrase in Judg 18,30, “until the land went into captivity”, is of particular interest for Sicre Díaz in that it reveals the horizons of the Jewish

editor's historical knowledge. Similar to G.F. Moore and G.L. Studer, he argues that the exile mentioned here pertains to the Northern Kingdom, hence occurring during the reigns of Pekah of Israel (740-731) and Tiglatpileser III of Assyria (527). Moreover, Sicre Díaz views Judg 18,31 as the cutoff point for the most ancient part of the book of Judges (the starting point being 2,6). Noteworthy in the second part (19–21) is Sicre Díaz's intertextual reading of Judges 19 and Genesis 19. Here again, he demonstrates his skill with this reading strategy, particularly how it allows him to draw out a deeper sense of the themes of violence conveyed in these texts.

Indeed, Sicre Díaz's commentary on Judges reflects a level of scholarly rigor and interpretive depth that should not be overlooked in the English speaking world. His research stretches across multiple time periods (ancient to modern) and a wide spectrum of languages (Hebrew, Greek, Latin, German, and English). His arguments are well crafted and show enormous respect for the authoritative voices in the study of Judges — sometimes to the detriment of his own scholarly voice. As with any scholarly contribution, however, there are few gaps that could have received a bit more attention in this book. Although Sicre Díaz does acknowledge the violence in Judges, particularly Judges 3 and 19, it would have been equally helpful to expound on the postcolonial trauma undergirding this violence. Here, postcolonial criticism can assist historical-critical readings of violence in biblical texts, especially those redacted after the Assyrian and Babylonian conquests. Apart from refining our understandings of the nature of the violence in Judges, postcolonial criticism can also offer viable explanations for why the redactors exaggerated on details related to war and conquest. From a postcolonial perspective, exaggerations and hyperboles may point more to a coping strategy, as in the case of emasculation, than to a benign storytelling strategy. Despite these interpretive gaps, Sicre Díaz's book represents an essential resource for postcolonial critics seeking depth to their historical contextualization of the book of Judges.

Austin Presbyterian Theological Seminary
100 E. 27th Street
Austin, Texas 78705 (U.S.A.)

Gregory L. CUÉLLAR

Adam H. HENSLEY, *Covenant Relationships and the Editing of the Hebrew Psalter*. London, T&T Clark, 2018. vii-311 p. 16 × 24. £85,00

La monografia in oggetto costituisce, nelle parole dell'autore, un'analisi della relazione tra l'alleanza davidica e quelle premonarchiche, così come è rappresentata nel Salterio: «[w]hat is the relationship between the Davidic Covenant and its premonarchic counterparts in the Psalter?» (2). Il libro dei salmi viene assunto nella prospettiva dell'esegesi canonica — vale a dire, letto ed interpretato come un'opera unitaria, con un suo messaggio globale e un suo piano editoriale. L'autore sottolinea l'intreccio tra concezione dell'alleanza e struttura del Salterio: «most editorial theories on the Psalter imply a particular relationship between the covenants or presuppose one» (2) e, allo stesso tempo, «views on how editors understood covenant relationships are often a consequence of how the Psalter's

editorial history is understood and, in many cases, its “redactional layers”» (14). L’assunto di fondo dell’opera è, quindi, che il modo in cui è concepito il rapporto tra l’alleanza davidica e quelle con Abramo e Mosè determina, in modo speciale, il piano editoriale del Salterio.

La metodologia adottata dall’autore si può riassumere a partire dalle indicazioni sparse nella sua argomentazione. Innanzitutto, viene apparentemente adottata una prospettiva affine a quella che D.M. Howard («The Psalms and Current Study», *Interpreting the Psalms. Issues and Approaches* [eds. D. Firth – P. Johnston] [Downers Grove, IL 2005] 28) definisce «semantic field or thematic approach», che usa i dati raccolti «to comment on the organization of the entire work» (29). Tale prospettiva viene anche qualificata come, in larga parte, *sincronica*: «the approach [...] was [...] synchronic in its attention to existing textual data, while remaining mindful of diachronic possibilities» (271). L’analisi tematica e sincronica serve ad identificare la percezione che gli *editori* avevano sia del materiale con cui lavoravano (i salmi), sia delle alleanze stesse: «the degree of unity and conceptual overlap that editors perceived between the covenants is precisely what this survey sets out to explore» (77). E ancora: «[t]his investigation is concerned with *editorial* perception of the tradition, not a historical investigation of narrower traditional strata» (80; enfasi dell’autore). Per questo motivo, l’autore spesso ripete come i rapporti tra le alleanze vadano indagati a partire dal testo stesso e non presupposti di principio (71).

La ricerca è strutturata in tre parti fondamentali, precedute da un’introduzione e coronate da una conclusione finale. Nella parte iniziale (capitolo 1), l’autore offre un breve *status quaestionis* sulle ricerche circa le relazioni tra le differenti alleanze nel Salterio e dichiara, a grandi linee, la propria metodologia. Nella parte I («Editorial Evidence and the Psalter»), dopo un brevissimo *status quaestionis* dell’esegesi canonica (capitolo 2), vengono analizzati i dati esterni (capitolo 3, «external evidence»: Qumran e la LXX) e interni (capitolo 4, «internal evidence»: sovrascritte; l’uso del nome divino; Sal 72,20; i «doppioni»; dossologie; legami lessicali e tematici) che permettono di identificare la struttura complessiva del Salterio e possono, di fatto, essere utili all’identificazione del suo «piano editoriale». Secondo Hensley, i dati testuali non permettono di appoggiare l’idea di una redazione in più fasi («multistage») e che è più ragionevole supporre, alla maniera di Mitchell, «one redactional impulse behind the Psalter’s macrostructure» (71). Per questo, la continuità o la discontinuità di prospettive tra le varie sezioni del Salterio va dimostrata e non data per scontata (71). Va notato come Sal 72,20 venga considerato dall’autore un dato della tradizione accolto dagli editori e interpretato come segnale del passaggio dal «Davide storico» (libri I-II) a quello «messianico» (libri III-V).

Nella parte II («An Exploratory Survey of Covenantal References and Allusions in the Psalter») l’autore si occupa di mettere in luce i riferimenti alle alleanze all’interno del Salterio, adottando due criteri di identificazione (come spiegato nella premessa metodologica al capitolo 5): lessicografico e «intertestuale» (locuzioni, lessemi, formule, temi, ecc.) alle differenti alleanze: «potential indicator [...], not a strict condition of an allusion to a covenant» (77). Lo scopo di tale parte è quella di mettere in evidenza i salmi in cui diversi generi di riferimenti o allusioni alle alleanze si intersecano e che occupano una posizione rilevante nella struttura del Salterio. Tali salmi, secondo l’autore, sono Sal 1–2; 72,17; 86,15; 103,8; 145,8.

È degno di nota come la dimensione intertestuale o di «allusione intrabiblica» (l'autore usa entrambi i termini) venga concepita: il punto di partenza è «the editorial reception and reuse of the individual psalm in which this dynamic has already occurred» (79). Gruppi e sequenze più che singoli salmi sono il «testo» e questo conferma la probabilità che «editors perceived an allusion in a specific instance through other reinforcing allusions» (79), dato che il focus è «to examine the *editor's* perspective rather than that of the psalm's author». Oltre che allusioni *testuali* si prendono anche temi e vocabolario, «without specific or obvious dependency on any one covenantal text» (79). Si assume che le allusioni siano state tanto più *percepites* dagli editori quanto più numerosi sono i contatti riscontrati (80).

Vengono prese in considerazioni prima le occorrenze del termine *b'rît* (capitolo 5), i richiami alla «formula di alleanza» (capitolo 6), ad alcuni testi o lessemi considerati di matrice mosaica (capitolo 7), ad Esodo 15, al dono della terra e ai riferimenti al Sinai/Oreb (capitolo 8). L'ampia ricognizione conduce l'autore ad alcune conclusioni, tutte, in qualche modo, collegate prima di tutto alla definizione di «Davide» nel Salterio, come colui che — nella percezione degli editori del Salterio — compie e porta a pienezza le alleanze con Abramo e Mosè. In questo senso, l'uso del termine *b'rît* mette in luce come «the unity of the covenants is in some sense a *theological* unity [that] lies in their common fulfilment through a future Davidic king», nel senso di una «theological “royalization” of the Abrahamic/Mosaic covenants rather than a “democratization” of the Davidic covenant» (110). Il Davide futuro, da questo punto di vista, viene ritratto come «covenant partner *par excellence*», «observer of the Mosaic covenant», «a *Moses-like singer of praise* who praises God for a new Exodus-like salvation», «a *priestly mediator* of YHWH's blessing and a *Moses-like intercessor*» (77-78).

Nella parte III («Psalms 72:17, 86:15, 103:8, and 145:8 in their Psalm and Book Contexts, and Psalms 1-2 as an Introduction to the Psalter») l'autore analizza, per l'appunto, Sal 72,17; 86,15; 103,8; 145,8, nel contesto dei rispettivi libri. Questi sono «psalms with the strongest potential to answer the question of covenantal relationship in the Psalter» (15). Per tutti e quattro i passaggi viene offerta un'analisi nel contesto del rispettivo salmo e, poi, per l'appunto, nel libro in questione. Le ultime tre occorrenze, in particolare, sono collocate all'interno di una trattazione un poco più ampia sull'uso della «formula della grazia» (Es 34,6-7) nel Salterio (capitoli 10-13). Quest'ultima «was important to those who arranged the Psalter, whether one posits multiple editorial stages or a single editorial impulse behind the Psalter's composition» (209). La conclusione è simile a quella raggiunta nella parte precedente: «Davide» è mediatore come Mosè che prega e dichiara il tempo della restaurazione di Sion e ringrazia Dio per la sua grazia. I riferimenti al proprio «peccato» (Sal 86,5; 103,3) vanno intesi come espressione formulaica: in nessun passaggio dei libri III-V il re è colpevole, ma il popolo. «In this light, it seems more likely that editors saw in these psalms the king's identification with sinners as a petitioner on behalf of God's people, not his personal guilt *per se*» (254). Infine, «Davide» è anche identificato con il «servo», il vindice del povero, figura sacerdotale legata a Sion. L'analisi dei Sal 1-2 («these psalms contain some of the strongest allusions to the covenant»: 255) conduce a conclusioni analoghe.

Nella parte IV, quella dedicata alle conclusioni, l'autore riassume sinteticamente le acquisizioni maggiori della sua analisi per trarne una risposta generale alla domanda posta in apertura. L'idea che il Salterio sia struttura in modo da riflettere una scansione binaria nella concezione della regalità e nel senso di una democraticizzazione di quest'ultima vengono rigettate: «editors royalized the premonarchic covenants and their associated promises and obligations [...] [they] anticipated an ideal Davidic successor who keeps torah and intercedes for God's people» (267). In ultima analisi, l'autore identifica una «strong continuity» (270) nelle prospettive dei diversi libri riguardo a «Davide» e giudica l'idea di una crescita «a diverse fasi» del Salterio non sufficientemente sostenuta dai dati testuali (270-271).

La monografia rappresenta lo studio più ampio finora edito del tema delle alleanze nel Salterio. Come tale, si inserisce principalmente nel dibattito circa l'esegesi canonica dello stesso. In particolare, il lavoro si inserisce a pieno titolo nella discussione circa la «editorial agenda» del libro dei salmi e si schiera a favore della posizione di D.C. Mitchell (*The Message of the Psalter. An Eschatological Programme in the Book of Psalms* [JSOT.S 252; Sheffield 1997]). Allo stesso tempo, l'autore prende posizione anche a proposito del dibattito circa il processo di formazione del Salterio. Quest'ultimo avrebbe già raggiunto la sua forma finale — quella del TM — prima delle testimonianze di Qumran (41) e sarebbe il frutto non tanto della rielaborazione di testi traditi quanto della loro incorporazione, *senza alterazione*, nel libro in formazione (69-70). I responsabili di tale lavoro vengono genericamente indicati come «editors» (al plurale e senza articolo), senza ulteriori specificazioni.

Il lavoro di Hensley offre un contributo prezioso, sia a livello metodologico che a livello di contenuto, allo studio del Salterio. Evidenziamo un punto «strutturale» dell'argomentazione aperto al dibattito: quello del rapporto tra forma testuale e *intenzione* («perception») degli editori. L'autore si mostra, in alcuni passaggi, cauto e possibilista in proposito; tuttavia, visto che l'analisi letteraria ha, da diverso tempo, messo sotto esame la possibilità di poter compiere questo passaggio (cf. ad es. D. Compagno, «Theories of Authorship and Intention in the Twentieth Century. An Overview», *Journal of Early Modern Studies* 1 [2012] 37-53) una riflessione supplementare sull'argomento è necessaria (cf. anche D. Willgren, «Did David Lay Down His Crown? Reframing Issues of Deliberate Juxtaposition and Interpretive Contexts in the "Book" of Psalms with Psalm 147 as a Case in Point», *Functions of Psalms and Prayers in the Late Second Temple Period* [eds. M.S. Pajunen – J. Penner] [BZAW 486; Berlin - Boston, MA 2017] 212-230). Ci sia anche concesso di sottolineare, infine, come il lavoro avrebbe anche beneficiato di alcuni riferimenti bibliografici ulteriori (cf. ad es. S.M. Attard, *The Implications of Davidic Repentance. A Synchronic Analysis of Book 2 of the Psalter* (Psalms 42–72) [AnBib 212; Roma 2016]; M. Pavan, «He Remembered That They Were But Flesh, A Breath That Passes and Does Not Return» [Ps 78,39]. The Theme of Memory and Forgetting in the Third Book of the Psalter [Pss 73–89] [ÖBS 44; Frankfurt a.M. 2014]). Nonostante queste osservazioni, il lavoro è senz'altro un contributo di grande valore per la recente *Psalmenforschung*.

Case Sparse Orgi, 28
I-52018 Borgo alla Collina (AR)
eremosgiuseppe@gmail.com

Marco PAVAN

Marieke DHONT, *Style and Context of Old Greek Job* (Supplements to the Journal for the Study of Judaism 183). Leiden, Brill, 2018. 409 p. 16 × 24.5. €125,00

Marieke Dhont's monograph on Old Greek (OG) Job moves through five distinct sections with the aim "to describe the language and style of OG Job within its literary and cultural context and explain why the book of Job was translated the way it was" (2). First, she introduces the field of research into OG Job before unpacking recent trends within the theoretical translation frameworks and opting for the approach of Polysystem Theory (PST). She then analyzes in detail both the Greek stylistic and rhetorical features of OG Job over the course of five chapters. The final chapter ties the work together in its synthesis of both data and theory in order to account for OG Job in its literary environment.

Since Origen's asterisked material in Septuagint (LXX) Job contains later additions to the OG, Dhont methodologically privileges the OG in her research as it is found in Joseph Ziegler's 1982 Göttingen edition. Regarding the differences between the Masoretic Text (MT) and the OG, Dhont holds that "the parent text of the Greek translator of Job did not differ extensively from the MT in length and that the origin of the shorter OG text lies with the translation technique" (33). Dhont approaches the origins of the OG in terms of its literary context and the multicausality at play in the translation technique. Thus, the origins of OG Job are "the result of a translator's conscious and unconscious approaches toward the source text" (19). This contrasts an interest in the LXX primarily concerned with textual criticism and geographical provenance.

Dhont's work also challenges vague assessments often repeated in LXX research pertaining to the skillset of Septuagint translators — did they write in "good" Greek, "literary" Greek, "stylistic" Greek? — and proposes that "a more nuanced understanding of OG Job is a desideratum" (3). In light of a translation that is "characterized by variation" and "complex in nature" (11), the remainder of the work seeks a more nuanced assessment of the data. Instead of describing elements of the translation as "good", "literary", or "stylistic", Dhont employs terminology she deems to be more precise: "natural Greek", "unnatural Greek", "high register" Greek. The term "natural Greek" refers to "to the language as it is used conventionally within the broader Hellenistic Greek world" (43). Thus, "unnatural Greek" refers to "lexical uses or syntactic constructions that do not appear outside of the LXX or literature dependent on the LXX" (43). And the phrase "high register" Greek applies to "those elements of vocabulary, grammar, and syntax that are characteristic of literary or poetic texts rather than of documentary and administrative texts" (42). These descriptors should be understood socio-linguistically and not qualitatively.

Chapters 2 and 3 survey theoretical models of translation and situate LXX research in terms of PST. PST conceives of language as a semiotic "system" which contains many layers sharing innumerable interactions. And while PST is really a theory of human culture, it can also apply to the literatures of any specific culture. As such, PST provides the theoretical basis to shift translation research away from simply focusing upon the transfer of linguistic data from source to target texts toward understanding translation as "a complex transaction taking place in a communicative, socio-cultural context" (48). In light of this, Septuagint

research must view the LXX as a socio-cultural document and not merely as a resource for text-critical information. Dhont positions PST as a model that can account for the multicausal phenomena involved in the creation of the LXX.

As it applies to LXX studies, PST may be understood in the following way. The larger macrosystem of Hellenistic Greek literature contains everything written in Greek within the Hellenistic timeframe. This macrosystem also encompasses all translated texts into Greek, including those categorized as Jewish-Greek literature. But these latter subsystems overlap with one another since Jewish-Greek literature contains both translated texts and original compositions. Furthermore, since the Jewish-Greek subsystem contains the LXX Pentateuch, an influential source and model for later Jewish-Greek translation and compositional literature, we can consider this to be a productive and independent polysystem in its own right. With these theoretical pillars in place, Dhont then analyzes the text of OG Job in the following five chapters.

In chapter 4, Dhont assesses features of Septuagintal and “natural Greek” usage throughout OG Job. She surveys such diverse phenomena as word order, syntactic and grammatical features of the Hebrew, features of Koine Greek, transliteration, and Septuagintalisms. Chapter 5 investigates instances of “high register” Greek which breach the patterns of consistency evidenced in “natural Greek” usage. Dhont discusses this higher register language as it pertains to vocabulary, syntactic, and rhetorical features. She concludes that such intentionality can be detected when Greek deviations from the Hebrew occur with non-standard lexical choices.

Chapter 6 surveys previous approaches to Hebrew poetry and rhetoric before providing a taxonomy of rhetorical features relevant to OG Job. These rhetorical features include chiasms, symmetry, anadiplosis, mesodiplosis, and others which the translator of OG Job employs in contextually sensitive ways. Chapter 7 continues this discussion by surveying sections of OG Job at the level of the colon. And Chapter 8 illustrates how the translator of OG Job employs several rhetorical tactics simultaneously. Here, Dhont discusses examples from OG Job which demand multicausal explanations of the translation process and advocates attention to linguistic context, literary context, other LXX translations, and familiarity with patterns of other Jewish-Greek literature.

Chapter 9 concludes the argument of the book by reconsidering the placement of OG Job in its literary and cultural environment. Dhont discusses the translator’s educational and cultural background as one who was highly educated and worked “within the Jewish polysystem as a part of the Hellenistic macrosystem” (307). She assess OG Job’s translation technique in terms of its Hellenistic setting: “It is because of the development of Jewish-Greek compositional literature towards the use of a higher register of Greek, that it became acceptable for translators to use a more natural and elevated style of language as well, which subsequently influenced the translation technique used by Jewish translators of texts such as the book of Job” (313). And she concludes the book by investigating why Job was deemed a suitable book for translation. Dhont highlights Job’s popularity in the Hellenistic period and discusses how readers would have viewed its status as authoritative.

I have very few criticisms of Dhont’s work on OG Job. Her research is thorough in primary and secondary sources. And her documentation is meticulous. This is evidenced by more than 1,100 footnotes which are fully documented in her bibliography which exceeds 50 pages. While the depth of research results

in dense argumentation at times, the benefits are worth the effort. Her work will prove to be a valuable resource for scholars working in the various avenues of Septuagint research since the monograph touches upon the following research areas: translation theory, the Hellenistic world, translation technique, Septuagint style and rhetoric, Hebrew and Greek poetics.

The monograph should also be praised for its goal of deepening the theoretical framework which undergirds Septuagint studies. Dhont's discussion of PST is novel to the field and convincing since it seems to account for the multicausality of influences upon the translator of OG Job. As she anticipates in the volume, much work needs to be done to develop and flesh out how PST can inform Septuagint studies. But the theoretical coherence and simplicity of PST should enable its acceptance by many scholars in the field.

Some minor typos occur throughout the work. But overall the monograph is well edited and organized. A fairly obvious error of analysis occurs on page 109 where Dhont discusses the Greek genitive absolute as evidence of high register Greek. While this grammatical feature is surely evidence of stylistic Greek, the example she provides from Job 38,8 does not contain this construction. It merely contains a nominative participle functioning adverbially. However, this singular error is not detrimental to her overall argument.

Regarding features of the Jewish-Greek polysystem, I was surprised to see that Dhont omitted any mention of the misunderstanding of Hebrew terms among the LXX translators. Emanuel Tov, Jan Joosten, Seulgi Byun, and Anne-Françoise Loiseau have all published on this topic in the past twenty years, noting how the Aramaic linguistic milieu of the LXX translators influenced their understanding and rendering of certain Hebrew lexemes. Discussion of this phenomenon would have aided Dhont's discussion of Job 23,16 on page 232 where we encounter the Hebrew term **בהל**. In biblical Hebrew, this term means "to be dismayed", but in Aramaic the same root means "to make haste, be eager". This latter meaning corresponds with the OG rendering of $\sigma\pi\omicron\upsilon\delta\acute{\alpha}\zeta\omega$ and suggests that the translator of OG Job read **בהל** in terms of its Aramaic semantics. Recognizing these linguistic and semantic features would have further nuanced Dhont's description of the Jewish-Greek polysystem, resulting in a more complete presentation. Perhaps future research will incorporate these phenomena into the theoretical framework of PST.

Last of all, the depth of discussion concerning PST in the opening of the monograph receives little attention throughout the remainder of the work. Both the theoretical and analytical discussions were equally persuasive in their own right. But the monograph lacks an overall synthesis of theory and analysis. The final chapter attempts to tie these two elements together, but it comes across as somewhat unbalanced. Even though Dhont tends to mention PST in the conclusion of each analytical chapter, I would still have appreciated a more integrated approach of theory and data throughout the work. Nonetheless, Dhont does supply the following caveat early in the work: "this book will represent a frame of reference that calls for further elaboration and refinement of the use of PST in LXX studies and, as such, opens up new paths of investigation" (65). We can hope that future LXX research will take up Dhont's excellent proposal and bring the theory and analysis into tighter focus.

Novum Testamentum

Joshua J.F. COUTTS, *The Divine Name in the Gospel of John*. Significance and Impetus (Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament 2. Reihe 447). Tübingen, Mohr Siebeck, 2017. xvi-259 p. 15.5 × 23. €79,00

Cette thèse de doctorat soutenue à l'université d'Edinburgh en 2016, sous la direction de L. Hurtado, se signale par des caractéristiques remarquables. Tout d'abord, elle fait le point sur l'état de la recherche au sujet d'un axe important du texte johannique d'un point de vue exégétique et littéraire. L'exhaustivité de l'information est admirable. La clarté de la présentation facilite la lecture d'un texte dense grâce à des introductions, des subdivisions, des sommaires et des conclusions à l'intérieur de chacun des cinq chapitres qui composent l'œuvre. Le ch. 5 surprend par sa brièveté eu égard aux précédents ; c'est qu'il anticipe déjà la conclusion qui synthétise les résultats de l'enquête. La méthode, quant à elle, s'avère féconde en distinguant, dès le sous-titre de l'ouvrage, à chaque étape de l'investigation, des distinctions pertinentes entre «réfèrent»-*referent*, «fonction»-*function*, «sens»-*meaning*, «signification»-*significance* et *impetus*-«influences» ou «contexte» des versets ou des péripécies étudiés. Dans l'aire francophone, il est plutôt question d'«explication», «compréhension» et «interprétation», aux différentes phases du travail sur les textes. Les influences sont surtout mises au compte de l'intertextualité, biblique et extra-biblique, de nos jours. L'établissement de «réseaux» ou «constellations»-*networks* et de «groupes»-*clusters* permet d'affiner l'élucidation de connotations et d'associations dans l'étude scrupuleuse des relations entre les différents champs sémantiques traversés. Le souci est permanent d'articuler le Nouveau Testament: l'évangile johannique et les œuvres apparentées des I^{er} et II^e siècles de notre ère, à l'Ancien, en particulier sous l'angle du Deutéro-Isaïe. Alors que tant de données rassemblées militent en faveur d'une authentique théologie biblique grâce à cette corrélation entre l'un et l'autre Testament, le souci de l'auteur se cantonne surtout à l'étude de concepts et de conditionnements socio-historiques. En tout état de cause, ce précieux matériau permet des prolongements au-delà des limites méthodologiques proposées.

Une copieuse introduction passe en revue l'intérêt johannique pour le nom divin à la lumière de la recherche en cours. L'acquis est résumé en traçant l'orientation des cinq chapitres. Le premier établit qu'Isaïe occupe un rôle prédominant en donnant forme aux convictions de Jean sur la catégorie du nom divin, sans préjudice pourtant à l'impact d'autres traditions comme celles de l'Exode. Le chapitre deux enchaîne avec la prise en compte de la glorification et de la révélation (Jn 12,28; 17,6.26): la variation des verbes pour la «connaissance» serait-elle purement stylistique (76 n. 15)? On peut en douter en ce qui concerne un vocabulaire aussi restreint que celui de Jean et préférer, contre la tendance majoritaire en la matière, adopter l'option d'après laquelle, à la différence entre des mots, même proches, correspond une différence de sens. La demande et la finalité concernant les croyants de garder le nom donné à Jésus (Jn 17,11-12) fait l'objet du chapitre trois. L'agencement des expressions de la venue ou des œuvres de Jésus dans le nom (Jn 5,43; 10,25 ; cf. 12,13) occupe le chapitre quatre. Le

cinquième chapitre propose un *impetus* socio-historique destiné à éclairer l'intérêt de Jean pour le nom, ce qui a pour effet de renforcer encore la pertinence de l'argument majeur. Le ton est objectif, dénué de la passion qui agite souvent ces débats, ce qui fournit à l'ensemble du dossier un bel équilibre. La discussion ne tourne pas tant autour de l'assemblée de Yavné-Jamnia qu'autour de la Birkat Haminim: ce dernier aspect de la question est peut-être plus relativisé qu'il ne convient (186).

Au terme, la conclusion ressaisit l'ensemble de la démarche, enrichie du résultat des études minutieuses qui jalonnent les cinq chapitres. S'y donnent libre cours des considérations imposées par le sujet traité. Après le sommaire de l'argument, il est question du lien entre le travail opéré et la théologie johannique. La problématique croise dès lors celle du *Logos* dès le prologue et le verset de Jn 1,14 au sujet du «Verbe, chair, devenu», dont «nous avons admiré la gloire: gloire de l'Unique-engendré du Père, accompli de grâce et de vérité». «La signification associative du nom ouvre une fenêtre sur Dieu dans l'évangile de Jean et donne accès à la dynamique Père-Fils dans la christologie johannique» (199). À cet égard, Jean est concerné autant par la christologie que par la théologie. En identifiant Jésus avec le nom divin, Jean présente Jésus dans les termes de la plus haute catégorie dont il puisse disposer. Il définit en ce sens Jésus à la fois dans les termes du Dieu juif et (re)définit le Dieu juif dans les termes de Jésus (200). Pour ouvrir à des recherches ultérieures, l'Apocalypse mériterait, selon l'auteur, d'être étudiée en lien avec l'évangile de Jean. Des travaux sont déjà disponibles dans cette perspective (Y. Simoens, *Apocalypse de Jean, Apocalypse de Jésus Christ*. 1. Une traduction; 2. Une interprétation [Paris 2014]). Quoi qu'on en ait dit et que l'on en dise encore, les composantes du *corpus* johannique s'interprètent au mieux l'une par l'autre (voir Y. Simoens, *Croire pour aimer*. Les trois lettres de Jean. Une traduction, une interprétation [Paris 2011]). L'inventaire d'autres textes et traditions pourrait également fournir d'utiles prolongements au travail accompli. La méthode suivie promet aussi une entrée renouvelée de la réception des textes et des traditions, encore trop dominée par l'étude des citations, allusions ou parallèles entre textes apparentés.

Pour contribuer à l'excellence du travail et ouvrir aux orientations proposées, revenons en premier lieu sur l'étude de la glorification dans son rapport au nom divin. La relation entre la gloire et le nom pose moins de questions que l'interprétation de la glorification elle-même. La glorification est ici comme souvent associée à la croix. Or il faut d'abord reconnaître, tant en Jean 12 qu'en Jean 13 et 17, la distinction entre deux temps de la glorification. L'un et l'autre sont valorisés *avant* la croix (Y. Simoens, *Évangile selon Jean* [Paris 2018] 337). Sauf pour l'évocation de la mort martyre de Pierre en Jn 21,19, le substantif «gloire» et le verbe «glorifier» sont absents des ch. 18 à 21. En fait, le premier temps de la glorification survient à la sortie de Judas de nuit en Jn 13,31-32, le deuxième en Jean 17. Jésus entre ainsi glorifié dans sa Passion, ce qui explique la théophanie, à trois reprises, du «Moi, je suis», en Jn 18,5-6.8. Les réminiscences d'Isaïe mériteraient à cet égard d'être complétées par le courant apocalyptique d'Ézéchiël et de Daniel. De plus, «le fils de la perdition» est la plupart du temps, comme dans cette étude, identifié par Judas qui serait dès lors «perdu» (80; 128). Mais si le salut de tous s'opère au détriment d'un seul, au nom en plus d'une interprétation de l'accomplissement de l'Écriture qui fonctionne dans le sens d'une prédestination à la perdition, le salut serait à recommencer. Le «Fils de la Perdition»

en Jn 17,12 est un synonyme du «Mauvais» (Jn 17,15) et du «diable» (Jn 13,2 qui nuance 6,70; cf. *Évangile de Nicodème* 20,3, dans *Écrits apocryphes chrétiens* [Paris 2005] II, 292). Enfin, tous les chapitres soulignent le caractère eschatologique des termes, expressions et thèmes étudiés. Est-ce faire assez droit à la proto-logie dont le quatrième évangile se présente comme un champion dès le prologue hymnique et jusqu'en Jn 17,5,24 (voir Pr 8,22-31; Job 28; Sirac 24; Ba 3,9 – 4,4; Sagesse 6–9)? Ce qui s'accomplit à la fin prend forme dès le commencement. Le principe vaut de tous les éléments qui composent le *corpus* johannique et plus largement pour toute la Bible. Ce serait aussi une manière d'honorer le fait que le Deutéro-Isaïe est le lieu d'émergence dans l'Ancien Testament d'une théologie de la création qui se retrouve dans la strate sacerdotale du Pentateuque et chez Ézéchiël, où elle est associée à la Nouvelle Alliance (Éz 36,27; Jr 31,31-34; Is 54,5).

Ces remarques ont pour but d'exprimer la reconnaissance qui s'impose à l'égard d'une telle somme de travail au service, non seulement du « nom divin », mais de la Parole de Dieu.

Un Appendice : *The Divine Name in Later Texts and Traditions*, évoque en finale un riche *corpus* qui se prête à l'investigation dans la foulée de la thèse. Deux champs sont distingués: A. *Name Glorification and Revelation* passe en revue les papyri grecs magiques, le *Corpus Hermeticum*, L'évangile de vérité; B. *Kept in the Shared Name* honore les Odes de Salomon, les textes de Nag Hammadi et le *Memar Marqah*. Une bibliographie de seize pages, un index des auteurs modernes, un index des sujets et un index des sources anciennes permettent une consultation commode de cette étude stimulante.

35 bis, rue de Sèvres
F-75006 Paris
yves.simoens@jesuites.com

Yves SIMOENS

Stephen WESTERHOLM, *Law and Ethics in Early Judaism and the New Testament* (Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament 383). Tübingen, Mohr Siebeck, 2017. x-371 p. 16 × 23.5. €169,00

This collection gathers twenty-two essays by Stephen Westerholm, professor emeritus at McMaster University. The author considers the ethical teaching of Jesus and Paul in relation to first-century Jewish understandings of the law of Moses. Many of the essays explore how the gospel message involved both a relationship of continuity and of discontinuity with the Torah as understood by Jews of the time. Other topics treated include the transmission of gospel tradition, the “new perspective on Paul”, recent debates on justification, and Paul's relationship with Judaism. Twenty of the studies were previously published, from 1982 to 2016, one essay (chapter 10) is an unpublished paper from 2006, and the introductory chapter is new.

The essays divide into three main categories: early Judaism (chapters 2–5), Gospels (chapters 6–10), and Paul (chapters 11–22). Each essay includes a bibliography, which W. has not attempted to update (19), though the bibliographies in the more recent essays meet this need in part. The first chapter provides an overview of the others; it is useful to re-read portions of it in conjunction with the other chapters, as it reflects W.'s current thinking.

Regarding the first category, W. highlights the pursuit of first-century Jews, regardless of their sect, “to conform their lives to Torah” (1). The Pharisees, for example, developed their halakhah to specify how in practice to comply with Torah’s statutes. Chapter 2 (from 2008) and chapter 3 (from 1986) consider the term Torah in early Judaism; it is mainly used for the sum of God’s commandments to Israel through Moses at Sinai, or for the Pentateuch where those laws are found (23, 44). As the law code of the Jewish people, the Torah was comparable to the law codes of other peoples. However, the Jewish people developed a reputation for their adherence to their laws. In chapter 5 (from 2004), W. considers *4 Maccabees* as a paraenetic appeal for Jewish readers to maintain this fidelity to their law, despite temptations to assimilate to Gentile ways. In chapter 4 (from 2006), W. discusses the anthropological corollary to Jewish views of the law, namely, that many early Jewish sources hold that righteous behavior in obedience to the law is possible. Following Timo Laato (51-53), W. explains that Paul in contrast has a more pessimistic anthropology (Rom 3,10.20.23; Gal 2,16), which derives from his christocentric soteriology. Paul thus reasons from solution (salvation in Christ) to plight (human enslavement to sin) (80, 347). An updated bibliography on this topic would include a monograph for which W. wrote the foreword: P.M. Sprinkle, *Paul and Judaism Revisited. A Study of Human and Divine Agency in Salvation* (Downers Grove, IL 2013) 125-144.

Moving to the second category, W. considers law in the New Testament in chapters 6 (from 2008) and 7 (from 2007). In contrast to the typical Jewish view toward the law, Jesus’ teaching (e.g., the Sermon on the Mount) focuses on obedience to *his* words and on the kingdom, whose ethical demands regarding righteous behavior surpass those of Torah (cf. Matt 5,20). Jesus does not abolish Torah but in various ways fulfills it (Matt 5,17), e.g., by prioritizing certain commands (love, mercy), intensifying others (prohibitions of killing and adultery), relativizing still others (tithing, ritual purity), and restoring God’s original intention where concessions had been made to human hardheartedness (marriage, divorce). (For a recent, similar treatment of Jesus’ ethical teaching in relation to Torah, see R.B. Hays, *Echoes of Scripture in the Gospels* [Waco, TX 2016] 120-128.) Thus, Jesus’ teaching, which emphasized the attitudes and actions that characterize those who seek to do God’s will as children of their heavenly Father, also differs from the Pharisees’ halakhah (which is the focus of chapter 8 [from 1982]): “true *goodness*, the goodness at home in God’s kingdom [...] is not the same thing as careful compliance with rules” (7). In chapter 7, W. compares the Matthean Jesus’ view toward the law with that of Paul. On the surface, they seem to be rather different, with the Matthean Jesus upholding the validity of the law, albeit relativizing it, and Paul maintaining that Christians are not under the law (140). In practice, however, “what Paul says about Christian moral behavior corresponds closely to Jesus’ insistence on observance of the weightier matters of the law” (142). W. offers here many rich insights, which should benefit not only other biblical professors but also scholars specializing in theological ethics.

Chapters 9 (from 2013) and 10 (from 2006) consider some fundamental issues regarding the Gospels. Chapter 9, which focuses on Matthew and Mark, discusses the nature of these Gospels and the authors’ intentions in writing. According to W., the purposes of Matthew and Mark were to provide authoritative accounts of the story of Jesus, not primarily “to address specific situations in particular communities” (169). Similarly, in chapter 10, W. argues that Jesus traditions were

preserved because of the intrinsic value accorded them rather than their pragmatic value to the communities (191). In these chapters, the influence of W.'s *Doktorvater*, Birger Gerhardsson, is evident (cf. 2, n. 6).

Turning to the third category, W. begins his treatment of Paul's letters with his long 2004 essay surveying the scholarly responses to the "new perspective" (chapter 11). As demonstrated principally in his monograph on the topic (*Perspectives Old and New on Paul*. The "Lutheran Paul" and His Critics [Grand Rapids, MI 2004]), W. has long distinguished himself as an able defender of the traditional "old perspective" and critic of the "new perspective." However, as he also explains in chapter 12 (a 2008 essay on Finnish contributions to these Pauline questions), W. agrees with the critique by Sanders of the traditional view, which tended to make a caricature of Judaism (231, 247). In W.'s view, the problem with Judaism, according to Paul, was not that it was legalistic, but that Jews, like other human beings, were unable to meet the condition of righteous behavior in obedience to the law (249).

In chapter 13 (from 2004) and again in chapter 18 (from 2013), W. takes up the alternative to the failed righteousness of the law, namely, the righteousness of faith. Here, W. reviews the terminology of righteousness (verb δικαίωω and cognates) and affirms that justification above all involves the vertical relationship with God — meeting the need of ungodly sinners (Rom 5,6,8) — rather than horizontal issues regarding Jews and Gentiles, as generally emphasized by "new perspective" proponents (on this topic, see also W.'s book, *Justification Reconsidered*. Rethinking a Pauline Theme [Grand Rapids, MI 2013]). Moreover, W. defends a forensic understanding of justification: e.g., the verb δικαίωω means declare (not make) righteous (254, n. 12, 256, n.13, 345). W. maintains such an interpretation even when discussing Rom 5,1,9,19 (261, 338-350), verses in which a good case can be made that justification involves not only declaring but also making a person righteous. For example, v. 19 refers to many who are "constituted as righteous" (δίκαιοι κατασταθήσονται) (350), which W. himself earlier translates as "made righteous" (261; cf. 352). Similarly, it seems difficult to maintain a merely forensic interpretation of justification in 2 Cor 5,21, in which Paul explains that "God exchanged the sin of humans with the righteousness of Christ" (261). On this issue and these verses, see J.-N. Aletti, *Justification by Faith in the Letters of Saint Paul*. Keys to Interpretation (AnBib Studia 5; Roma 2015) 19-26, 35-36; and T.D. Stegman, «Paul's Use of *Dikaio*- Terminology. Moving beyond N.T. Wright's Forensic Interpretation», *TS* 72 (2011) 500-504, 518-519.

In many of the other essays in this section (chapters 14-17, 19, and 22), W. discusses Paul's understanding of Torah in relation to his teaching on Christian moral behavior. On this question, W. earlier explains how his view has developed from that expressed in his work, *Israel's Law and the Church's Faith*. Paul and His Recent Interpreters (Grand Rapids, MI 1988). Now as then, he believes "that Paul understood believers to be free from obligations to the Mosaic law in all its parts"; however, since that work, he has come to see that effectively "Paul did expect believers to observe the moral requirements of Mosaic law, though he expressed the matter differently" (231, n. 86). Namely, Paul identified the good demanded of all human beings with the moral part of the Torah (142, 257-259, 363, 389) (cf. Rom 2,13; 6,12-19; 8,4; 13,8-10; Gal 5,6). Christians are called to "fulfill" this law (which relates to love) (Gal 5,14), rather than "do" it (Lev 18,5) (280, 292-296, 399). They must serve "righteousness" and they can do so by the Spirit,

not the flesh or the letter (cf. Rom 2,28-29) (263, 285, 310, 323-335). These are helpful distinctions, well grounded in the text. On these issues, see also Brian S. Rosner, *Paul and the Law*. Keeping the Commandments of God (Downers Grove, IL 2013).

In chapters 20 (from 2012) and 21 (from 2013), as well as in chapter 1, W. treats Paul's relation to Judaism. W. acknowledges many points of continuity between the pre-Damascus and post-Damascus Paul. For example, Paul always valued his Israelite ancestry (Rom 11,1) and had great love for his Jewish kin (Rom 9,3) (8). He also kept reading the same Scriptures (though interpreted now with a new hermeneutical key), recognized God's ongoing fidelity to Israel (demonstrated by the "remnant" of Jews who believe in Christ), and believed that all Israel would eventually be saved (Rom 11,26) (382-395). However, these points involve discontinuity as well. Furthermore, W. notes that Paul could speak of his former way of life in Judaism (Gal 1,13) (9, 369-370). Normally, he did not continue to live like a Jew (1 Cor 9,20) (10-11, 376, n. 19). W.'s thinking on this issue is thus quite different from that of scholars in the "Paul within Judaism" perspective, such as Mark Nanos and Magnus Zetterholm (14-16, 21).

In summary, W. offers the reader a fine collection of essays that thoroughly engage the biblical text and present well-argued positions on a host of important current issues in New Testament studies.

Seton Hall University
400 South Orange Avenue
South Orange, NJ 07079
pablo.gadenz@gmail.com

Pablo GADENZ

Peter J. LEITHART, *Revelation 1–11* (The International Theological Commentary on the Holy Scripture of the Old and New Testaments). London, Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2018. x-502 p. 15 × 22. £64.80

Peter J. LEITHART, *Revelation 12–22* (The International Theological Commentary on the Holy Scripture of the Old and New Testaments). London, Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2018. x-501 p. 15 × 22. £64.80

In 2018 Peter J. Leithart, president of the *Theopolis Institute for Biblical, Liturgical, & Cultural Studies* in Birmingham, Alabama, authored the two-volume commentary on the Apocalypse (1–11 and 12–22), published in the ITC series.

Judging from the perspective and style of the series, one would expect this imposing work (more than a thousand pages in all) to provide a scientific examination of the text; instead, it presents a more theological and pastoral approach, sometimes even confessional. The style and language are meant to be both captivating and accessible, even to those outside the academic world. For this reason, there are instances where the author writes more like a pastor, as in the beginning where he does not hesitate to quote, among the other literary, philosophical and cinematographic references with an apocalyptic bent, an episode of *The Simpsons* cartoons, *Gotham*, and Rudolph Valentino (1.1). The author is even more informal in the introduction to the second volume: "Welcome back. If you are not coming back after finishing volume 1, you are not welcome here. Read volume 1 first. That

is an order. As I was saying ...” (2.1). This quote is representative of the colloquial style with the use of the first-person singular throughout the two volumes. It is also telling that the author ends each chapter of both books with a prayer. The author’s explicit intention is to highlight the celebratory background of Revelation, according to the reiterated warning of the angel: “Worship God” (1.53).

This conversational approach is also reflected in Leithart’s methodology. He does not use footnotes but, instead, inserts directly into the text insights, clarifications, references to other authors, and relevant explanations. The references are often in parentheses: e.g. “(A hurried reader — that may be you! — can follow my overall interpretation of the book without a single small-print note)” (1.3).

In the Introduction (1.1-53), the author shows how the Apocalypse, as a “book of the Bible”, recapitulates themes from the OT and traces their fulfillment (1.4-20). Similarly, but to a lesser degree, the author considers how Revelation, as a “book of the New Testament”, consolidates material from other NT books (1.20-24). Perhaps he exaggerates this point, particularly when he says: “Revelation alludes to every book of the OT. It is the NT’s ‘OTest’ book” (1.4). Nevertheless, the tables comparing biblical passages are interesting. The OT-Revelation table is more convincing, although some of the allusions are questionable and, as the author confesses, it is a “*far-from complete list*” (1.5). The NT-Revelation tables (“again a very partial list”, 1.21) are even less conclusive, although they do make some attractive suggestions. The weakest entries are those that parallel John 1 with Revelation 21–22 (“the *inclusio*”, 1.22) and the “the Wedding in Cana” in John 2 with “the Wedding of the Lamb” in Revelation 17–19 (1.23). Despite these difficulties, his intention “to close the gap between John’s Gospel and Revelation” (1.51) makes good sense.

A more problematic issue in the Introduction is how the author, referring to Andrew Perriman, defines *oikoumene* (1.32-36). Leithart argues that “[w]hat comes from heaven is not Rome but new Jerusalem, a strong indication that the fallen city is old Jerusalem” (1.32). The inhabited world surrounding the new city would form the *oikoumene* (cf. Luke 2,1; Acts 11,28; 17,6; 24,5) a group of nations constituted by God in order to protect Jerusalem. In addition, there is the decision to translate γῆ as “land” instead of “earth”, except when γῆ is contrasted with οὐρανός (not οὐρανός, as appears twice in 1.55): “Babylon (Jerusalem) is not called (implausibly) queen of the ‘kings of the *earth*’, but naturally queen of ‘kings of the *land*’” (1.51). In keeping with this approach, the author, relying primarily on Daniel, associates the texts with the condition of Israel, which was subjugated in turn by Babylon, Persia, Greece, and finally Rome. For the author, these are the nations that, with their respective rulers, form the *oikoumene*, understood as “a world system that Yahweh establishes during Israel’s Babylonian exile, a world system that, for the Bible, centers in Jerusalem” (1.33). It follows that the fall of Babylon, described in Revelation 18, would correspond to the Roman destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple in 70 CE. Two implications follow from this interpretation: firstly, “the fall of Jerusalem was the collapse of this entire world-system” (1.34); secondly, the destruction of Jerusalem would correspond to the “great tribulation” (1.34) which Jesus described in the “Olivet Discourse” of Matthew 24 (1.30-31). It marks the transition to a new order, inaugurated by Christ, brought to completion by the martyrs with their blood, and enduring as the kingdom of saints (millennialism).

The actual commentary begins in the second chapter of the first volume and continues until the end of the second volume. The author always offers his own translation (defined by himself as “eccentric”), but notably without providing a Greek text for reference. The author indicates that this was deliberate: “I have given very limited attention to textual issues, mainly taking Holmes’s text [*SBL Greek New Testament*] as my basis” (1.50). His interpretation and hermeneutic is motivated by a unique, historical perspective. Leithart dates Revelation to the 60s CE. This hypothesis, though discordant with most ancient testimonies (which are duly reported and analyzed), is not as surprising as one may think, given that it is in agreement with a marked tendency in contemporary scholarship; this date is also proposed in the recent commentary by Klaus Berger, *Die Apokalypse des Johannes* (Kommentar I-II; Freiburg – Basel – Wien 2017) (1.78-85). The most important implication of assigning an early date is that the content of the book must be rated as “a book of poetic prophecy” (2.440). From this perspective, the bulk of the book refers to events that will happen in the near future. Consequently, the book “must be read within the frame of first-century concerns” (1.51-52). Hence, in Rev 1,1, when we read that the revelation (ἀποκάλυψις is translated as “an unveiling”) was given by God “to show to his slaves things that must happen shortly” (1.67), the author intends exactly this. It follows that the message is addressed to the churches of Asia Minor (the seven churches of the Letters: Revelation 2–3) to foretell the fall of Babylon (as mentioned before, the earthly Jerusalem, with the power system connected to it) and the establishment of the new Jerusalem, identified with the kingdom of Christ and his saints (“it is the city that Christians now inhabit, the church of the millennial age”, 2.439). In the same way, Leithart understands Revelation 6–11 to be directed toward the events of the apostolic church, with the division among the people of Israel separating those who accept the Gospel from those who do not. For him, these chapters describe the persecution suffered by some synagogues, the victory of Christ, the transformation of martyrs into the “twenty-four elders”, and a focus on the figures of the “four horsemen” (as the author writes: “Historically, this portrays the dynamics of the early apostolic mission”, 1.296). Two sections, Revelation 4–5 and Revelation 21–22, are treated in isolation from the rest. Revelation 4–5 is described as the only part of the book which refers to the past, given John’s description of the ascension of Christ (1.209-269). Revelation 21–22 is understood as speaking of a more remote time which would include the manifestation and the establishment of the new Jerusalem, building on the historical features already outlined (2.357-409).

A legitimate question might be raised about those passages of Revelation which have a strong symbolic connotation but are difficult to connect to historical events. A striking example is chapter 8 where, on the occasion of the breaking of the seventh seal, we read that, in conjunction with the sound of the first trumpet, “hail and fire, mixed with blood, was cast upon the earth. A third of the earth was burned, a third of the trees burned, and every green grass burned” (v. 7). It does not appear that such events ever happened, let alone in the first century CE. The same is true in the following chapter, where, at the sound of the fifth trumpet, John says he sees a star falling from heaven on earth: “He was given the key to the pit of the Abyss; he opened the pit of the Abyss and from the well rose a smoke like the smoke of a great furnace, and it darkened the sun and the atmosphere. From the smoke came grasshoppers, which spread out on the earth, and they were given a power equal to that of the scorpions on the earth” (9,1-3). Even in these cases,

the author maintains his determination to treat every passage as a reflection of "actual historical events and characters under the veil of symbols" (1.52). The implication is that, even with such a highly symbolic caricature, historical events are represented from the life of the church in a first-century context. In chapter 8, γῆ, as already indicated, is understood as a "land" in the sense of "nation" or "country", and not as "earth", and this paves the way for seeing the passage as a description of the violent persecution and martyrdom of the first Christians (1.361). This martyrdom motif is strongly emphasized throughout the course of the commentary. The martyrs see their suffering and cruel death united to those of Christ. They are the fulfillment of the mystery of salvation which Christ has accomplished, a historical realization of the kingdom he inaugurated. In this interpretation, the star of chapter 9 would represent the divine power of Jesus (from above) opening the door to the underworld (the pit of the Abyss), allowing the persecutors, animated by evil, to act freely, but only for a limited time (v. 5: "And they were allowed not to kill them, but to torment them for five months").

The basic hermeneutical approach of the author is to ground the interpretation in history: "Revelation indicates that theology is a study of history and of God's activity in history. Theology is not an investigation of ideas, though there are ideas aplenty in the Apocalypse" (2.440). This is what the author clearly reiterates in his final theological synthesis ("Theological Observations", 2.439-447), once again introduced in his own eclectic way: "A stern warning (though not as stern as John's): Do not read these concluding observations unless you have actually read the commentary!" (2.439).

The author certainly remains faithful to his original purpose, even when he deviates from the model of a scientific commentary. He is aware of his own historical context: "This is a woefully parochial commentary, taking sources and examples from my own American setting and my own little slice of the church and world" (1.51). It is admirable that he does not get bogged down in systematic categories nor entangled in biblical and canonical concerns. The fact is, however, that there is a lack of depth and rigour that an "International Theological Commentary" requires. The author is honest right from the beginning that he has undertaken a more modest kind of exegetical commentary based on a specific linguistic, critical, and historical investigation. There are, however, some limitations that are particularly lamentable. First of all, the author restricts his bibliography to English-language sources. Although the author makes extensive use of patristic sources and Christian antiquity, in the study of a text like Revelation one should not neglect Jewish and Greco-Roman traditions, particularly in terms of the extra-biblical apocalyptic literature. Leithart almost completely ignores this literature, except in some sporadic cases (1.56; 2.196, 223, 231). Given the author's commitment to interpret everything from the perspective of historical events that marked the life of the Church in the first century, the symbolic language of Revelation becomes depleted, i.e. its value as a metaphorical, universal and transcendental vision is obscured. The eschatological vision, which constitutes the very soul of Revelation, is undermined. The author is aware that he has chosen "a strongly earth-oriented eschatology" (1.52). The same can be said about the author's treatment and understanding of Trinitarian formulae in the text. He observes that "its Trinitarian formulae are richly suggestive" (1.52), and even though they "are not always explicit, [...] they are pervasive" (2.441). However, when he draws certain conclusions about the main effect of this Trinitarian presence in

the text (“grace and peace”, 1.84), he again limits this to a purely historical motif: “Filled out Trinitarianly, ‘grace and peace’ mean this: To establish peace on earth” (1.85).

In addition to the author’s passion and dedication that is palpable on every page, the reader will appreciate how the author attempts to present a unified theological vision in continuity with the theology of the NT. “[Apocalypse] presents a stunning *totus Christus* nuptial-political Christology-ecclesiology, in which the glorification of the Christ continues beyond his ascension and is fulfilled in the formation of a Bride who is the glory of the Last Adam” (1.52).

Pontificio Seminario Lombardo
Piazza S. Maria Maggiore, 5
I-00185 Roma
luca pedroli70@gmail.com

Luca PEDROLI

Varia

Ionuț Daniel BĂNCILĂ, *Die mandäische Religion und der aramäische Hintergrund des Manichäismus*. Forschungsgeschichte, Textvergleiche, historisch-geographische Verortung (Mandäistische Forschungen 6). Wiesbaden, Harrassowitz Verlag, 2018. x-301 p. 24.5 x 17.5. €76,10

The research Dr. Băncilă developed as a PhD dissertation in the Theological Faculty of the Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin during the Winter semester 2014-2015 represents an important step forward in the investigation of the profound connections between Mandaeism and Manichaeism, and further demonstrates the pertinence of the study of the religious background behind both traditions, which share many common roots. The volume is organized in three large chapters, after a preface and a helpful introduction. The first chapter mainly concerns the history of scholarship from the earliest investigations up to the present (“Das Verhältnis zwischen Manichäismus und Mandäismus: eine Forschungsgeschichte”, 24-82). The second chapter (“Literarisch Beziehungen zwischen Mandäismus und Manichäismus”, 83-157) is dedicated to the literary connections between these two religions, while the last chapter (“Mandäische und manichäische mythische und historische Geographie”, 158-233) offers an overview of mythical and historical geography in both traditions, focusing on the central role of Jerusalem. The volume concludes with a short final section and an extensive bibliography.

Starting with the *Einleitung*, the author frames the problems very carefully. Not only does he pay attention to the present social and psychological trauma of the Mandaean community, drawing on sources that are rarely quoted by other authors, but from the outset he also addresses the vexed question concerning the origins of the community. Băncilă observes that the Mandaean religion is not identifiable *per se* as a visible and united community in the 3rd or 4th century CE, nor do the references to it in the 5th century provide sufficient data for a satisfactory history.

It is only after the 7th century, with the rise of Islam, that the literature of the community provides a reliable portrait of its essential features.

This book employs a methodology which produces convincing and useful results. Following the available evidence, the author shows that a systematic comparison of Mandaean texts with the Manichaean sources is necessary. The analysis should focus on the very special features of the Gnostic *Kunstsprache* (83), which develop a number of formal themes and exhibit characteristic modes of expression. This is not a simple or straightforward task, as the author acknowledges (11-13), because the most important "Mani-Codex" is now considered to have been compiled much later than the 4th-5th century, and "diese Neudatierung mehr Probleme aufwirft, als sie lösen kann" (11). Even the Coptic texts leave many questions unanswered; the specialist of Mandaeanism must work with reference to an approximate "relative chronology" (15), which is given in an inverted order from the latest sources to the earliest ones ("von jüngeren zu älteren Gattungen"), and which is presented as follows: liturgical instructions (*šarh*), the esoteric ritual exegesis (pl. *razia*), the *Book of John*, the *Ginza*, the *Qolasta*, and magic literature.

Of course, all these serious difficulties cannot dissolve the witness of the Mandaean magic literature, which, in particular with its *Bleirollen*, was dated by Rudolph Macuch to the 3rd century CE. But this proposal does not persuade Băncilă to adopt the category of "Proto-Mandaeanism" as a comfortable way of escaping the main difficulties of tracing the relationship between the two traditions. For him, taking that approach would oversimplify the historical evolution of this community in the course of its long history.

From the historical and methodological point of view, the author recommends treating Mandaeanism as an institutional religion only after the coming of Islam, when proper Mandaean material was finally collected in texts like the *Ginza* or the *Book of John*, whose origin derives from a compilation of different earlier materials (6). For this reason, Băncilă suggests a strict use of "Mandaeanism" in quotation marks (9) to mean "Mandaean material" (10). He emphasizes the fittingness of the German expression *mandäische Gedankengut*. Attempting to trace the stratigraphy of Mandaean materials reveals complex patterns. Some textual material found in these sources might be better understood in the light of later Mandaean literature, which, in spite of its apparent age, contains older strata. Băncilă offers another significant *caveat* against treating the "Mandaean material" as "Aramaic", arguing that this term has inappropriate connotations. Instead, he recommends exploring the evidence of the Mandaean tradition from a religious point of view, which seems to be a more promising perspective: "eine Erforschung der ostaramäischen Religiosität" could shed light on Manichaeism as well (20).

The first chapter concerning the history of scholarship is fascinating, because the author tells the story of a very complex and secular debate, drawing on an extensive bibliography which includes reviews that show how various theories gained or lost scholarly support over the years. Băncilă's judgment on the history of scholarship is critical but not unreasonably so. He strives to provide a full portrait of the field and to avoid one-sided judgments. Inevitably, any bibliographic survey like this invites criticism, since scholars might easily object to the absence of one or another of his/her masters or otherwise favorite scholars who addressed the Manichaean and Mandaean problems in one way or another. For instance, the omission of the contributions by H.J. Polotsky, W.B. Henning and W. Sundermann

seems strange to me, as is also the case with the Italian scholars, Gh. Gnoli and G. Messina. Such choices are always highly debatable, but also understandable if we consider the time necessary to develop a full treatment of every figure in the field. It is in any case a pity that Băncilă did not decide to prepare at least a list of the authors whom he does mention, especially in the chapter concerning the *Forschungsgeschichte*, because this would make the book a more useful reference work. I hope that in the near future he might consider the possibility of developing this single chapter into an independent monograph, potentially with the cooperation of other scholars from different disciplines, because, as he himself remarked, the perception of the Manichaean-Mandaean problem radically changes according to the perspectives provided by each researcher's own discipline.

In the second chapter the author tries to reconstruct the foundational presence of a basic "*mandäisches Gedankengut*" in the literary and religious production of some ancient communities speaking Aramaic or other related languages and dialects in Mesopotamia, but without excluding the influences of other social and cultural groups, as previously stated in the *Einleitung*. Băncilă systematically analyses a number of literary and symbolic "Motifs", each of which constitutes an essentially Mandaean trait and whose presence in the Manichaean literature cannot be definitively attributed to Mani's *Lehrsystem*. These motifs are substantially four, although they appear in different ways: (I) the Gnosis as Water; (II) the Baptism in the Column of Light; (III) the dualistic representation of Water; and (IV) the theme of the "Black Water", as another dualistic representation of the world with close relation to the magic literature.

In particular, the author takes the view that the "dualistic formula" attested in three variants in the *Ginza* are probably a later text compared to the version in the "Mandaean Liturgies" (*Qolasta*) (142-143), which, in its turn, finds good parallels also in some magical Aramaic texts (146 ff.). In particular, the Mandaean liturgical version and the Aramaic magical one, taken together (7-8, 145, 150, 156), are considered to be the common basis for the Manichaean "confession", which survives in the Parthian fragment M 1971 and in the Greek text from Kellis (152-154). The author provides a large range of supportive arguments (226-227) for this hypothesis, positing that these (Mandaean) texts may well have been associated with a sort of ritual (*masiqta*) that the Manichaeans adopted (230). The reconstruction of such an early liturgy postulates a kind of ritual "standardization", which may be inferred from the contents of some (arguably later) Mandaean colophons (226-230). The resonances suggest to Băncilă that there probably were "textual communities" in South-Babylonia that could not yet be classified as "Mandaean" but which became "Mandeanized" in the end. In the framework of the 3rd chapter, the author wisely refrains from identifying these early communities with the "Baptists" from the *Codex Manichaeus Coloniensis* because of a lack of explicit evidence (223). Later this ritual became an integral part of the Mandaean religion, but it also transmitted to the Manicheans themselves (or simply shared with them, in my view) some texts or hymns (230, 231-232, and note 252, on *Thomaspsalmen*). This very fascinating topic has been discussed by T. Sävje-Söderbergh (*Studies in the Coptic Manichaean Psalm-Book*. Prosody and Mandaean Parallels [Uppsala 1949] 60-61) and by C. Colpe ("Die Thomaspsalmen als chronologischer Fixpunkt in der Geschichte der orientalischen Gnosis", *Jahrbuch für Antike und Christentum* 7 [1964] 77-93, esp. 70-71), and deserves a further, separate investigation.

The author argues that behind the development of Manichaeism there is an older tradition based on other strands of inspiration which almost certainly would also have had a direct influence on the Mandaean tradition. This investigation is particularly interesting in its treatment of the Iranian parallels.

The third chapter presents a very original and convincing approach to the mythological geography of Manichaeism and Mandaeanism, particularly the representation of Jerusalem, which partly reflects earlier literary traditions that made an impact on both religious traditions. The influence of this background material seems to be undeniable, and we are indebted to the author for gathering such a large volume of data for future scholars to explore. This volume demonstrates that the Mandaean tradition played a major role in the history of the spiritual and cultural heritage of the ancient and late antique Near East, and that the earliest form of Mandaeanism provided a literary and theological framework from which Mani himself may have taken some inspiration.

In conclusion, this book has many merits. Firstly, it gets out of a sometimes unproductive amphibolic game concerning the relative chronology between Manichaeism and Mandaeanism, in which usually Mandaeanism is perceived as receiving its essential qualities from Manichaeism. The systematic investigation of earlier patterns shows that this model cannot be followed blindly. Băncilă has reassessed the problem of “Dualism” in all these Gnostic traditions in order to discourage any simplistic qualification of the Dualistic elements in Mandaeanism as *naturally* “Manichaean” influences (133-134, and in general ch. I). Instead, he suggests taking the opposite approach, recognizing that the Mandaean material drawn from a “proto-Mandaean” tradition almost certainly influenced the worldview of Mani and his rituals. I think that the Aramaic magical heritage and the Mandaean and Manichaean materials (§ II.4) present us with a turbulent textual situation, in which the fresh approach brought by Băncilă opens new paths of investigation. His working hypothesis, which is not dogmatic, represents a sort of positive “Popperian” challenge to the traditional framework and deserves our thoughtful consideration. This approach may also provide a new perspective on the interaction of the Iranian background with the proto-Mandaean framework.

Department of Cultural Heritage
University of Bologna
Campus of Ravenna
Via degli Ariani 1
I-48121 Ravenna
antonio.panaino@unibo.it

Antonio PANAINO

NUNTII PERSONARUM ET RERUM

JOHN KILGALLEN, S.J. (1934-2019)

In memoriam

Giovedì, 27 giugno 2019, è deceduto nella casa St. Camillus (Wauwatosa, Wisconsin, USA) all'età di 85 anni, il R.P. John Kilgallen, S.J., professore emerito di esegesi del NT della Facoltà Biblica del nostro Istituto.

Nato a Chicago (USA) il 29 gennaio 1934, P. Kilgallen si era diplomato al St. Ignatius College Prep nel 1952. Entrato nella Compagnia di Gesù il 1° settembre 1952, aveva fatto il suo noviziato e juniorato a Milford (1952-1956) prima di studiare filosofia al West Baden College e conseguire la licenza in filosofia (1959). Aveva poi conseguito il *Master of Arts in Classical Studies* (greco e latino) nel 1961 alla Loyola University di Chicago (LUC) e la Licenza in Teologia alla Bellarmine School of Theology (1966). Il 10 giugno 1965 era stato ordinato sacerdote.

Il 16 ottobre 1967 si iscrisse al Pontificio Istituto Biblico (matr. N. 3400) e il 16 giugno 1969 conseguì la Licenza in S. Scrittura. Subito dopo proseguì gli studi nel ciclo di Dottorato completando il III anno (1969-70) e l'elaborazione della dissertazione dal titolo *The Stephen Speech: A Literary and Redactional Study of Acts 7,2-53*, difesa il 21 maggio 1974. Moderatore della dissertazione era il prof. R.P. Carlo Maria Martini, S.J.; secondo relatore il prof. Dionisio Mínguez, S.J. La dissertazione fu poi pubblicata con lo stesso titolo nella collana «Analecta Biblica» (num. 67; 1976).

Dopo gli studi di dottorato, P. Kilgallen fu professore di teologia alla Loyola University di Chicago (1973-1979, 1982-1988) e direttore accademico della sede di Roma della Loyola University di Chicago (1979-1982).

Negli anni accademici 1987-1990 tenne dei corsi all'Istituto Biblico in qualità di professore "invitato" e il 5 maggio 1990 fu nominato professore "ordinario" di esegesi del N.T. Il suo campo di insegnamento era prevalentemente l'opera lucana (vangelo di Luca e Atti degli Apostoli). Diventato emerito nel 2004, insegnò ancora per 5 anni. Nel 2009, all'età di 75 anni, lasciò l'Istituto per far ritorno nella sua provincia religiosa (USA Midwest Province), continuando a insegnare Teologia alla Loyola University.

Durante i suoi anni di insegnamento al Biblico accompagnò numerosi dottorandi nell'elaborazione della loro dissertazione (uno come moderatore e quindici come secondo relatore). Dal 1989 al 2000 era stato anche editore per il Nuovo Testamento della nostra rivista *Biblica*.

P. Kilgallen ha esercitato il suo insegnamento della S. Scrittura, oltre che con le lezioni frontali in classe, anche attraverso le sue pubblicazioni: *A New Testament Guide to the Holy Land* (tradotta in italiano, polacco e coreano) e vari commenti, di carattere divulgativo, agli Atti degli Apostoli e ai Vangeli di Marco, Matteo e Giovanni; *Twenty Parables of Jesus in the Gospel of Luke*; and *Understanding Sunday Gospels*. Inoltre, la sua bibliografia annovera più di un ottanta di articoli, molti dei quali in *Biblica*.

Per molti anni, aveva pubblicato ogni settimana un articolo per i Vangeli della domenica, molto ben curato esegeticamente e di grande diffusione. A grande richiesta, lo aveva poi ampliato includendovi anche la seconda lettura della domenica.

PONTIFICIUM INSTITUTUM BIBLICUM
ANNUS ACADEMICUS 2018-2019. II SEMESTRE

Auditores inscripti erant 324, qui in diversas categorias sic distribuebantur:

	Ad Doctoratum	Ad Licentiam	Hospites	Universi
Fac. Biblica	58	228	27	313
Fac. Orientalistica	0	1	10	11
Universi	58	229	37	324
Nationes	72	Alumni	324	
Dioceses	151	Alumni	170	
Inst. Religiosorum	36	Alumni	93	
Inst. Religiosarum	20	Alumnae	20	
Ex statu laicali	41	Alumni	13	
		Alumnae	28	

LAUREA

Laurae in Re Biblica digni declarati sunt:

FILANNINO, Francesco, *Fra il precusore e i discepoli*. Unità del piano divino e centralità del ministero di Gesù nel vangelo di Marco (summa cum laude) — Moderator: Prof. Henry Pattarumadathil, S.J.

JUNG, Chun, *Il paradosso messianico secondo Marco*. Rilevanza di Mc 8,31–9,29 per la caratterizzazione di Gesù e dei discepoli (magna cum laude) — Moderator: Prof. Massimo Grilli

PROKOP, Daniel, *The Pillars of the First Temple (1 Kgs 7,15-22)*. A Study in Ancient Near Eastern, Biblical, Archaeological, and Iconographic Perspective (summa cum laude) — Moderator: Prof. Peter Dubovský, S.J.

RUIZ RODRIGO, Juan Antonio, *Desde la atalaya hermenéutica de Isaías*. La función retórica y estilística de Isaías 12 dentro del libro de Isaías (bene probatus) — Moderator: Prof. Peter Dubovský, S.J.

TEDEŠKO, Alan, *I Salmi 50–51 nel loro contesto canonico* (cum laude) — Moderator: Prof. Gianguerrino Barbiero, S.D.B.

Doctores in Re Biblica renuntiati sunt, typis edita thesi:

BRUM TEIXEIRA, José Lucas, *Poetics and Narrative Function of Tobit 6* (Deuterocanonical and Cognate Literature Studies 41). Berlin – Boston, MA, De Gruyter 2019. xxii-326 p.

CONIGLIO, Alessandro, “*Ma tu, Signore, Dio misericordioso e pietoso, lento all’ira e ricco in amore e fedeltà*” (Sal 86,15). Studio dei rapporti di intertestualità tra Es 34,6-7 e il Salterio. Roma 2019. 123 p. [estratto]

FILANNINO, Francesco., *Fra il precursore e i discepoli*. La missione di Gesù nel vangelo di Marco (Analecta Biblica - Dissertationes 224). Roma, Gregorian & Biblical Press 2019. 380 p.

NIEDZWIEDZKI, Tomasz Piotr, *The Patriarchs in the Land of the Targums*. Roma 2019. 81 p. [estratto]

PESSOA DA SILVA PINTO, Leonardo, *Different Literary Editions in 2 Samuel 10–12*. A Comparative Study of the Hebrew and Greek Textual Traditions (Textos y Estudios Cardenal Cisneros). Madrid, CSIC 2019. 309 p.

RUIZ RODRIGO, Juan Antonio, *Desde la atalaya hermenéutica de Isaías*. La función retórica y estilística de Isaías 12 dentro del libro de Isaías. Roma 2019. 140 p. [estratto]

SANTOPAULO, Luigi, *Sogno, Segno e Storia*. Genesi e fenomenologia dell'immaginario in Dn 2–6 (Analecta Biblica - Dissertationes 223). Roma, Gregorian & Biblical Press 2019. 172 p.

SZYMCZAK, Tomasz, *La ricezione del vangelo di Matteo nella "Vetus Syra"* (Analecta Biblica - Dissertationes 221). Roma, Gregorian & Biblical Press 2019. 371 p.

TEDEŠKO, Alan, *I Salmi 50–51 nel loro contesto canonico*. Roma 2019. 156 p. [estratto]